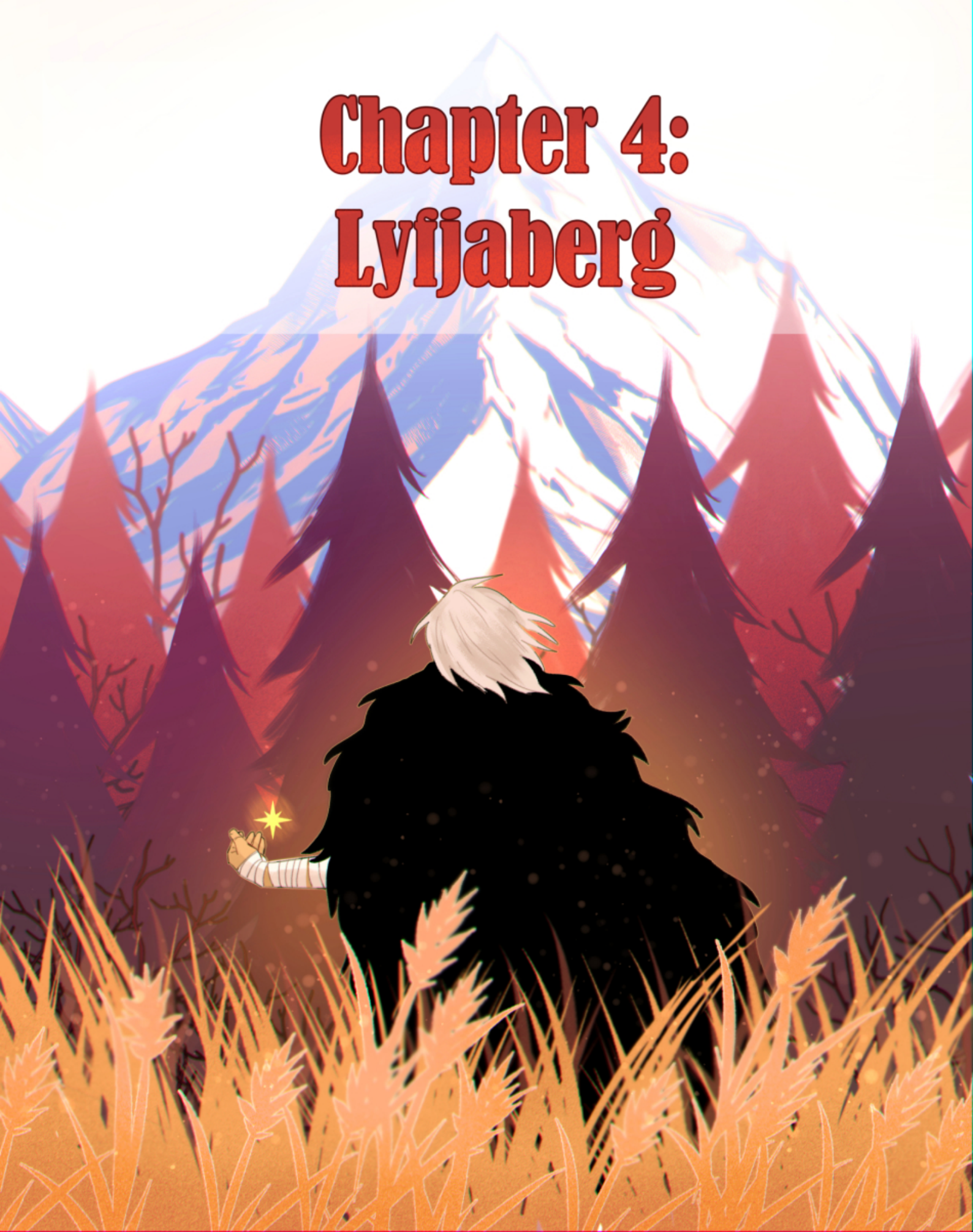
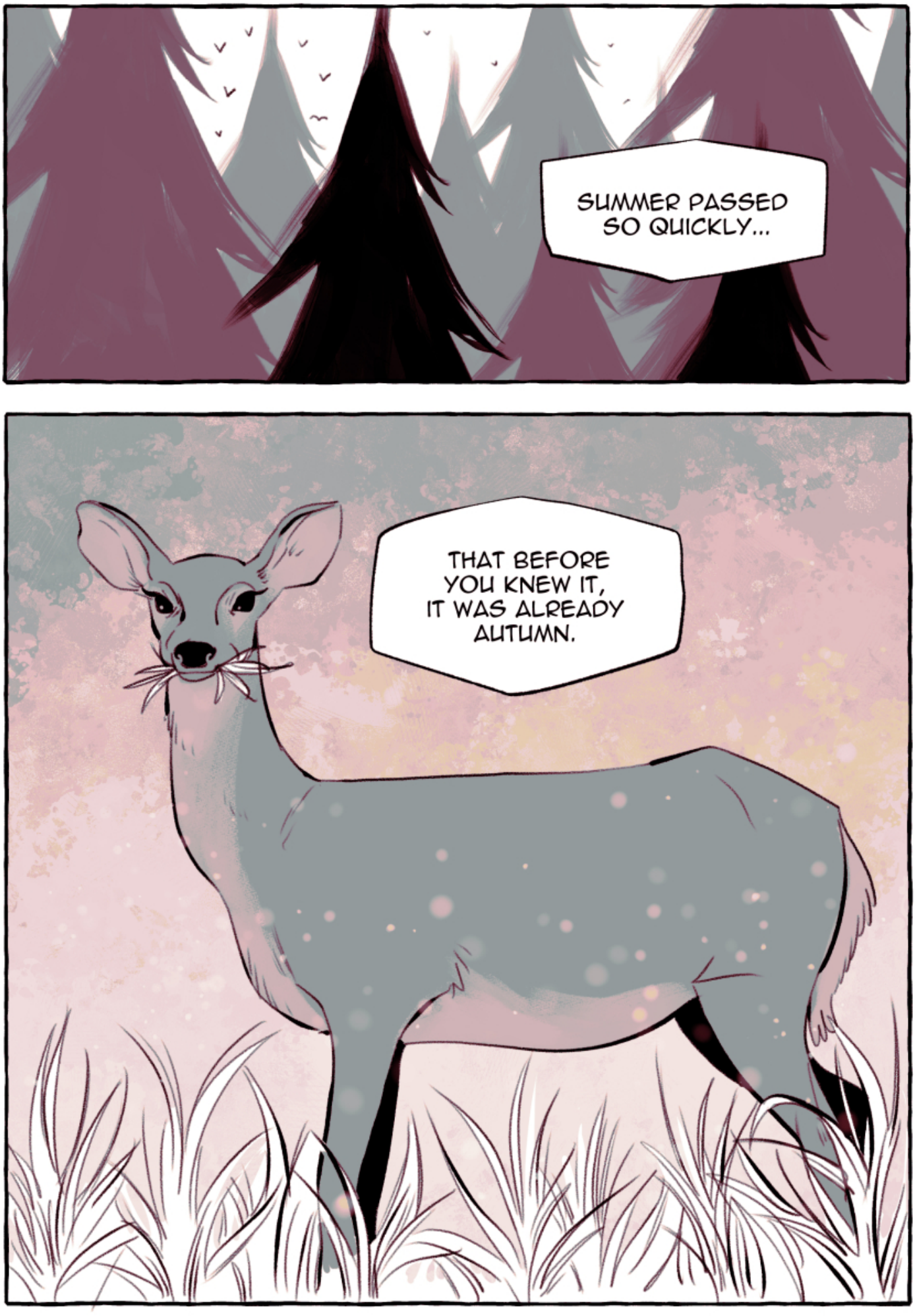
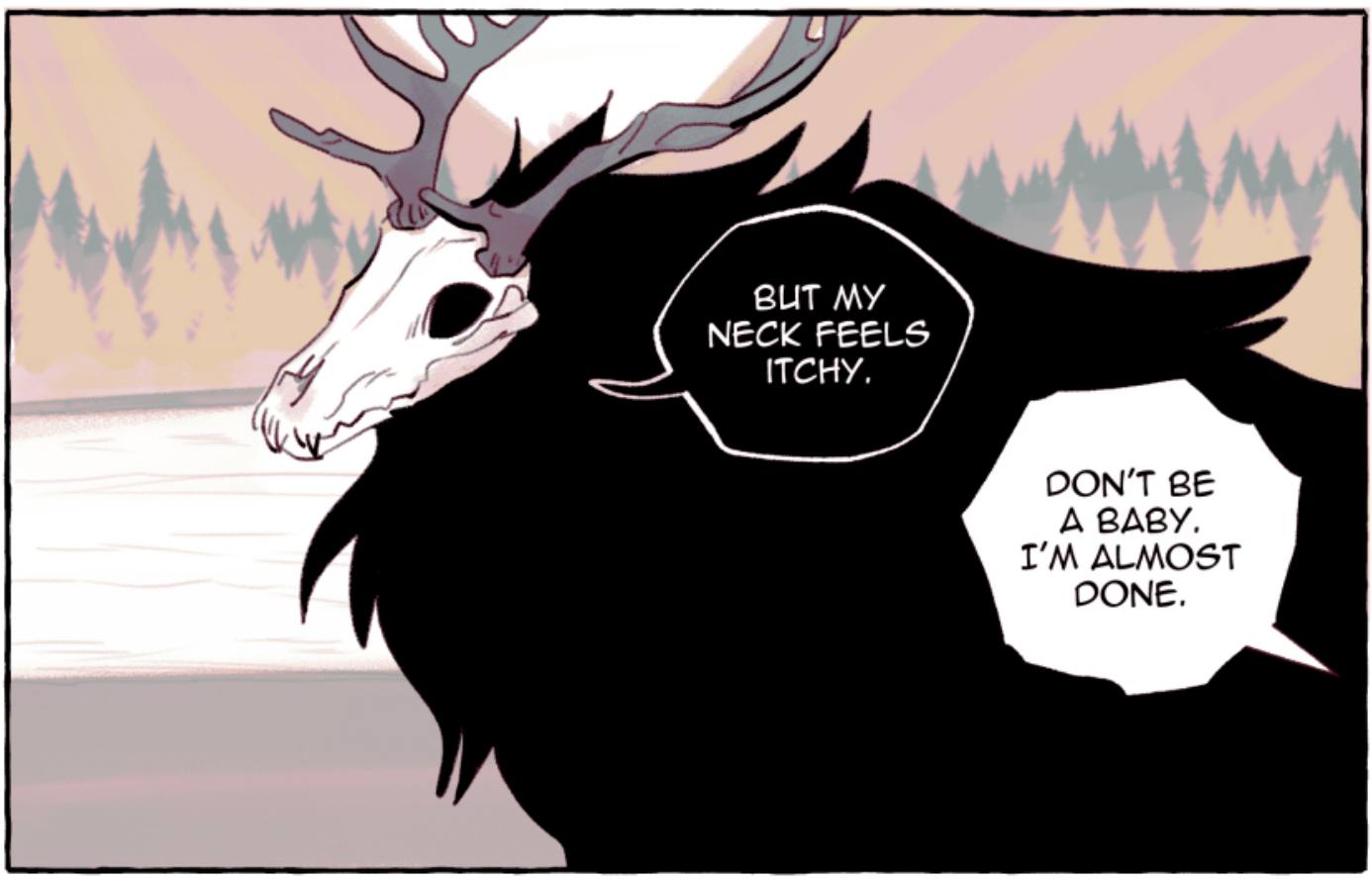
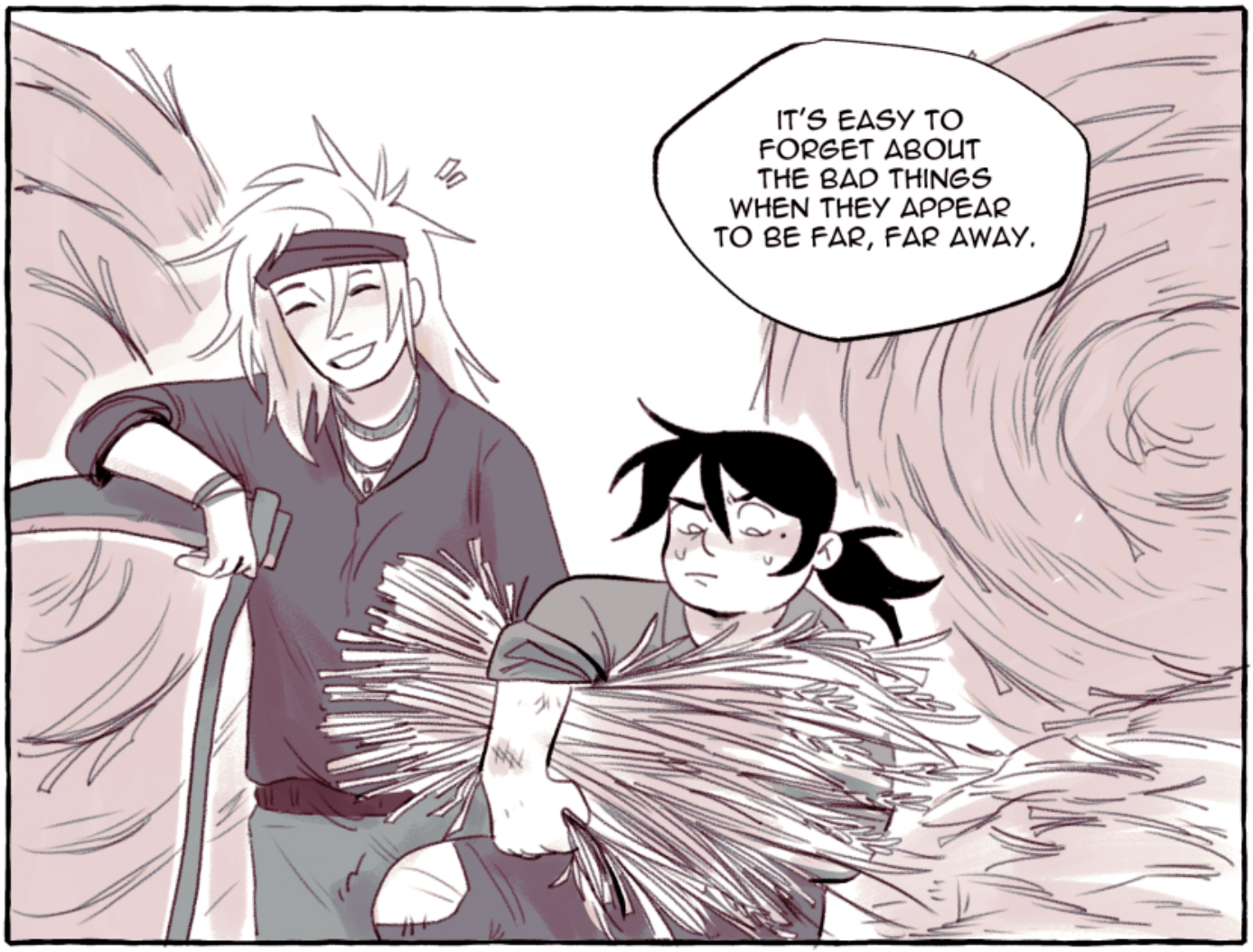

Chapter 4:
Lyfjaberg

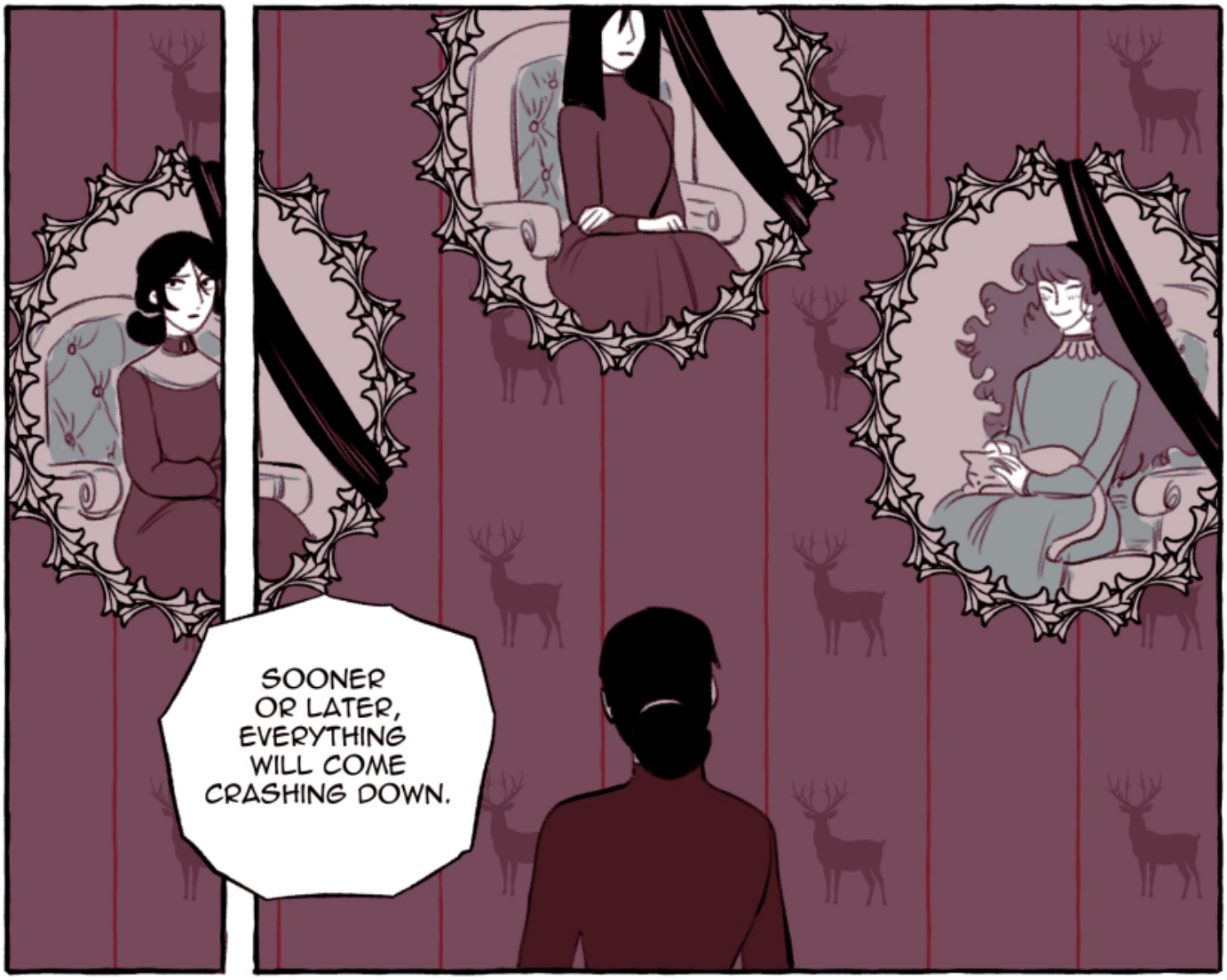

SUMMER PASSED SO QUICKLY...
THAT BEFORE YOU KNEW IT, IT WAS ALREADY AUTUMN.

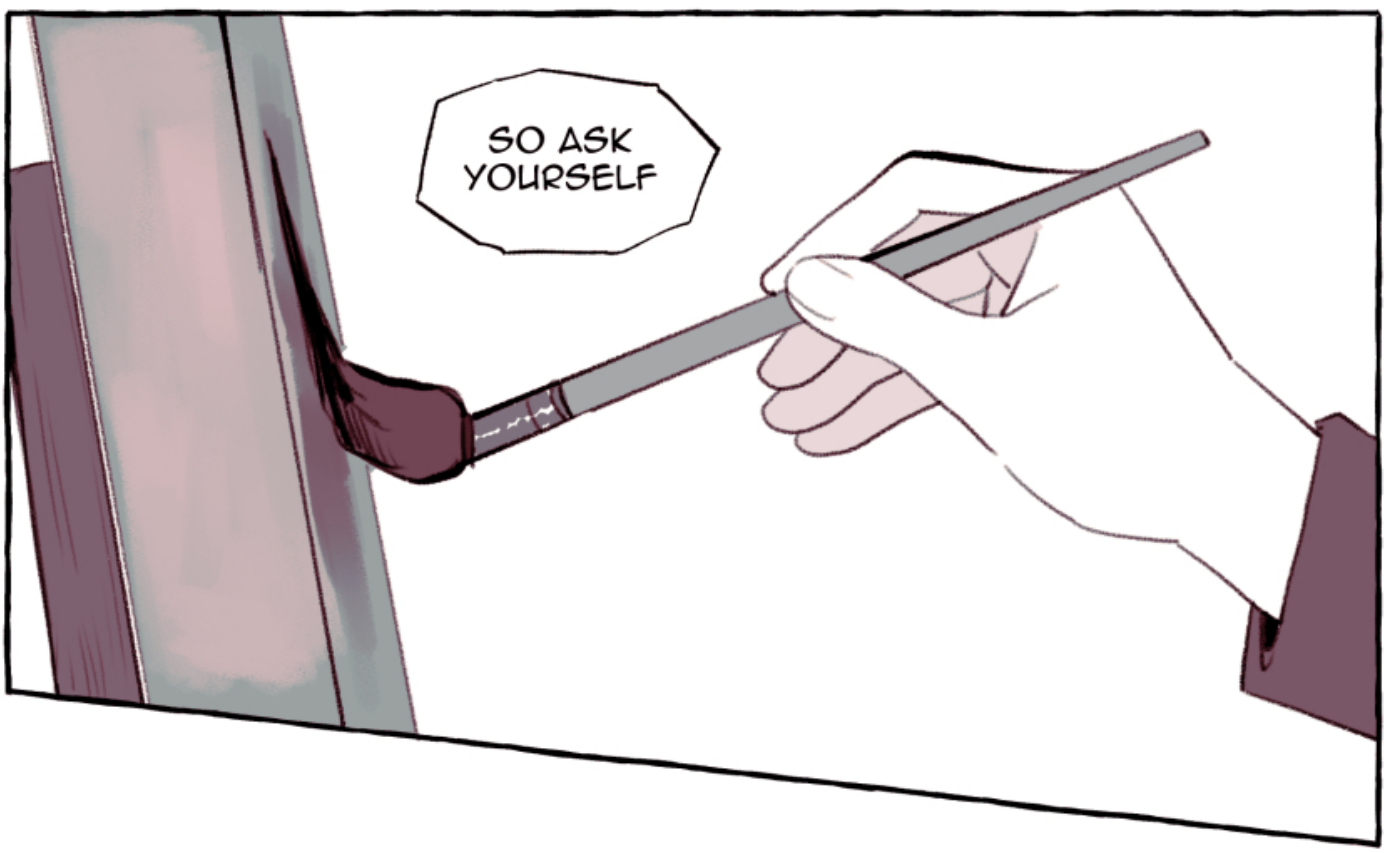
I SAID: STOP MOVING!
YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW HARD IT IS TO PAINT ANTLERS!


BUT MY NECK FEELS ITCHY.
DON'T BE A BABY. I'M ALMOST DONE.

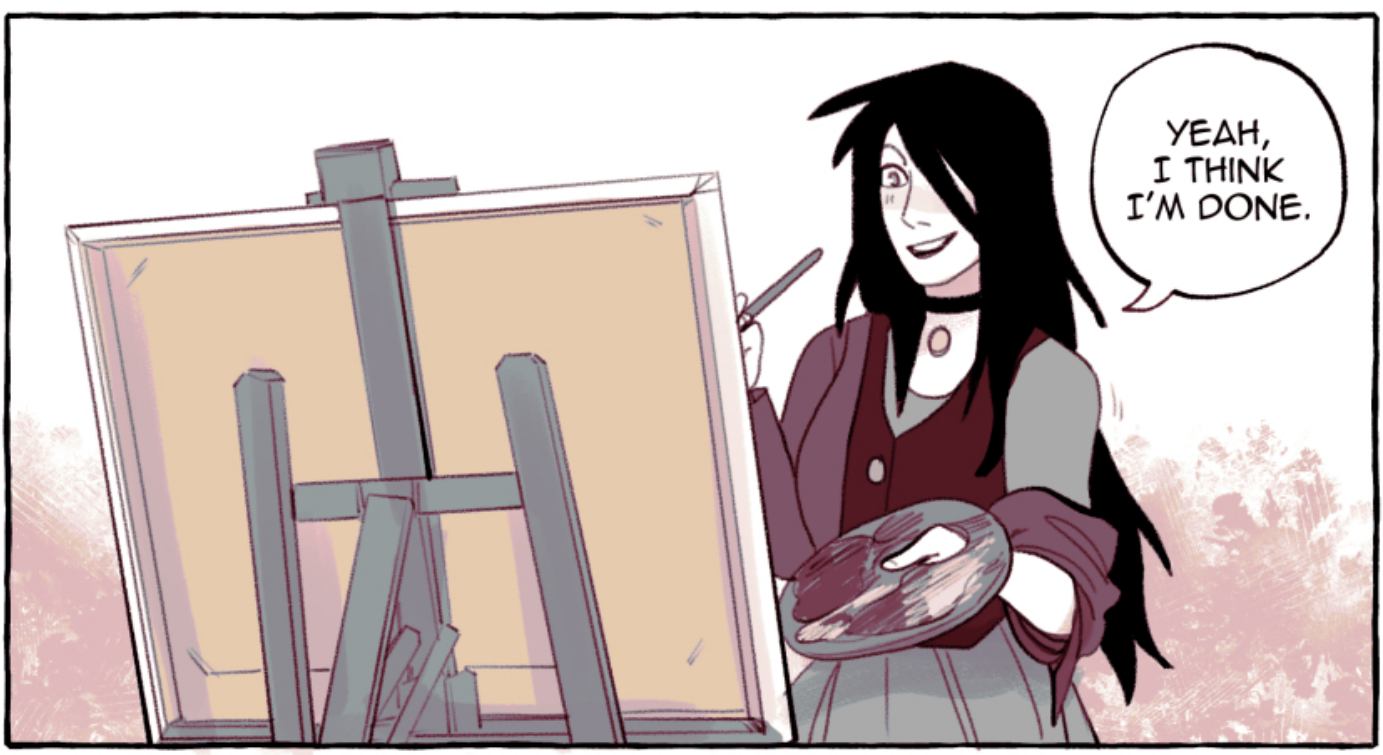

IT'S EASY TO FORGET ABOUT THE BAD THINGS WHEN THEY APPEAR TO BE FAR, FAR AWAY.

BUT RUNNING AWAY CAN ONLY BRING YOU SO FAR.


SOONER OR LATER, EVERYTHING WILL COME CRASHING DOWN.


SO ASK YOURSELF

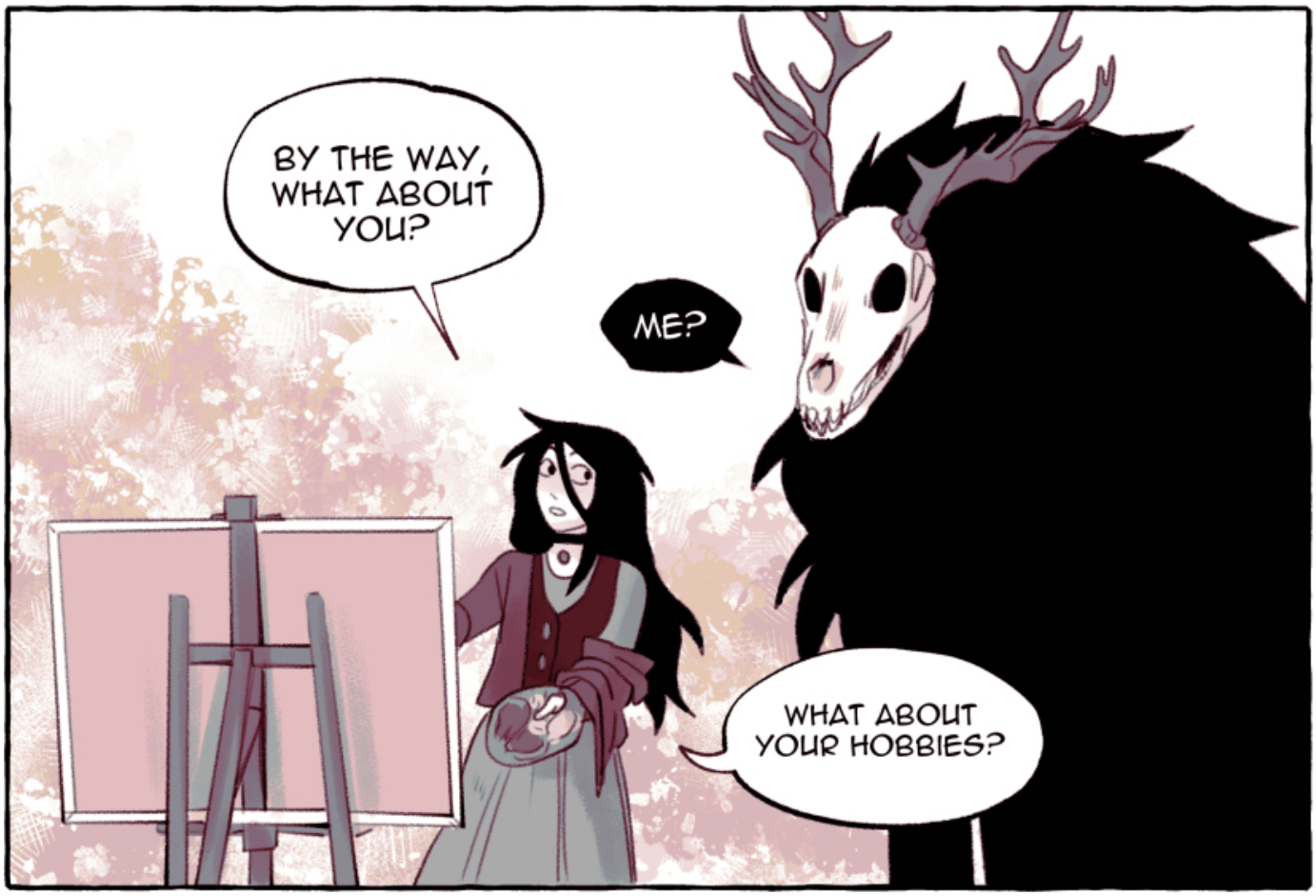
ARE YOU BRAVE ENOUGH TO FACE THE TRUTH?



FEELS GOOD
TO PAINT AGAIN.

I WANNA SEE.

DO YOU LIKE IT?
I MUST SAY, YOU ARE VERY GOOD AT PAINTING.
VERY IMPRESSIVE, AVA.


BY THE WAY, WHAT ABOUT YOU?
ME?
WHAT ABOUT YOUR HOBBIES?

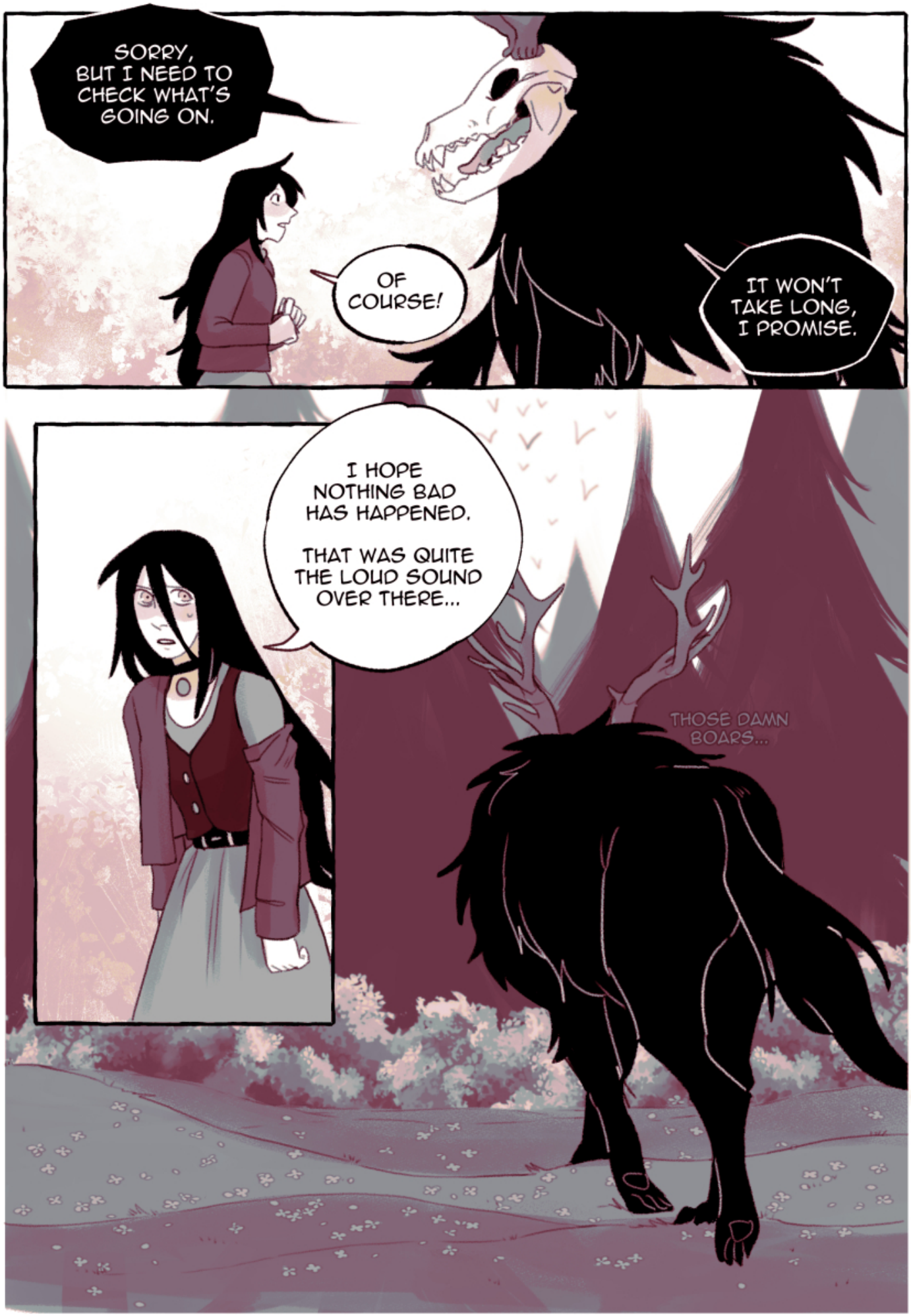
WHAT DO YOU DO FOR FUN?

HMM, I'M NOT SURE.
EVERYONE HAS A HOBBY!

WELL, I LIKE TO LOOK AT THE STARS. DOES THAT COUNT?
OF COURSE IT COUNTS!

WHO KNOWS, MAYBE WE COULD...
TURN
LOOK AT THE STARS TOGETHER ONE DAY?

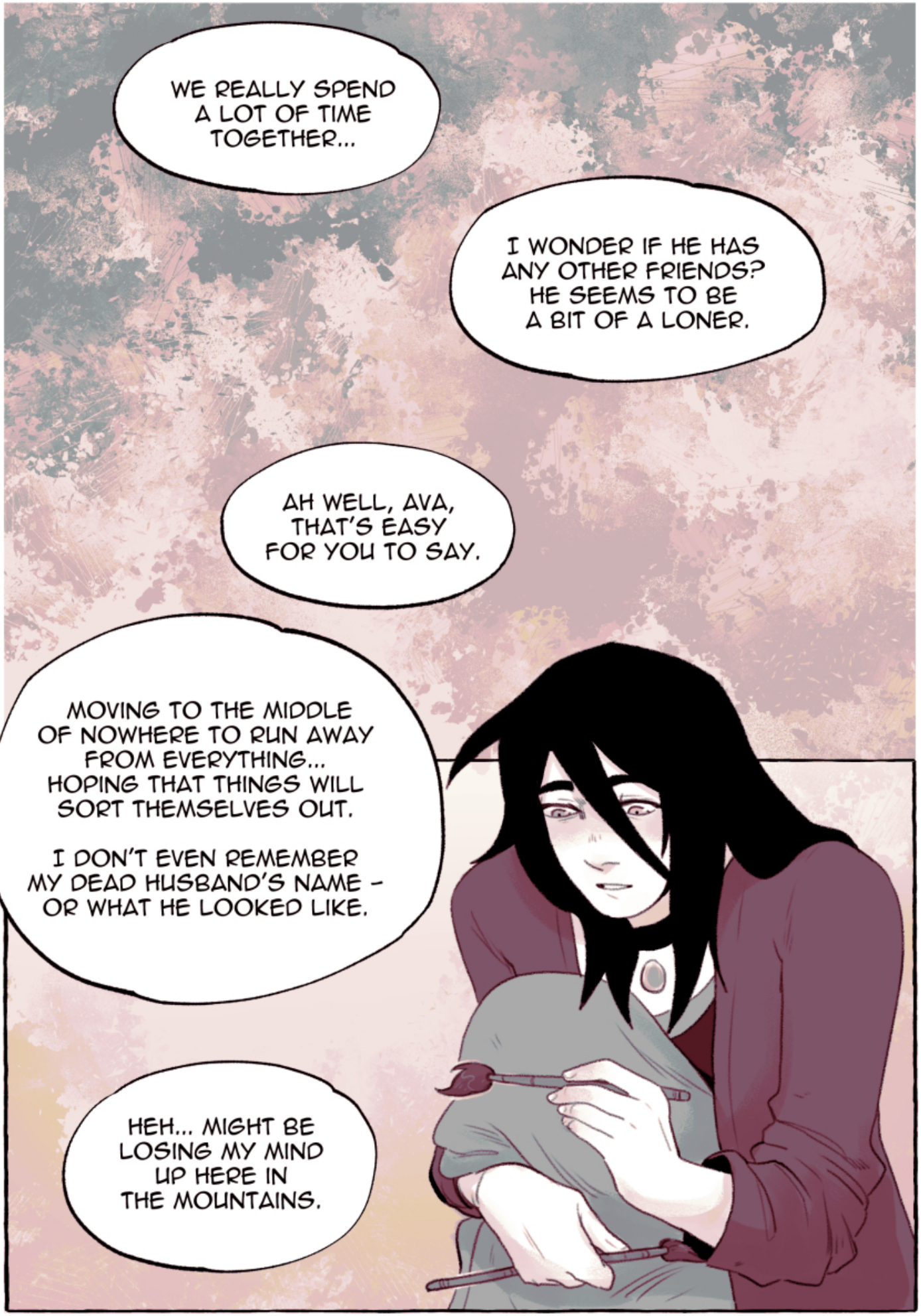
YOU DON'T HAVE TO HANG OUT WITH ME, THOUGH. JUST- AN IDEA, YOU KNOW.
AVA, I-
CRASH!!!
CAW!
CAW!
CRASH!!
SQUEAK!
OH BY THE STARS, WHAT IS IT NOW?


SORRY, BUT I NEED TO CHECK WHAT'S GOING ON.
OF COURSE!
IT WON'T TAKE LONG, I PROMISE.
I HOPE NOTHING BAD HAS HAPPENED.
THAT WAS QUITE THE LOUD SOUND OVER THERE...
THOSE DAMN BOARS...

WAS IT WEIRD TO INVITE HIM TO GO STARGAZING?
I HOPE NOT.

HMM...

I SHOULD WASH THEM OUT BEFORE THE PAINT DRIES.

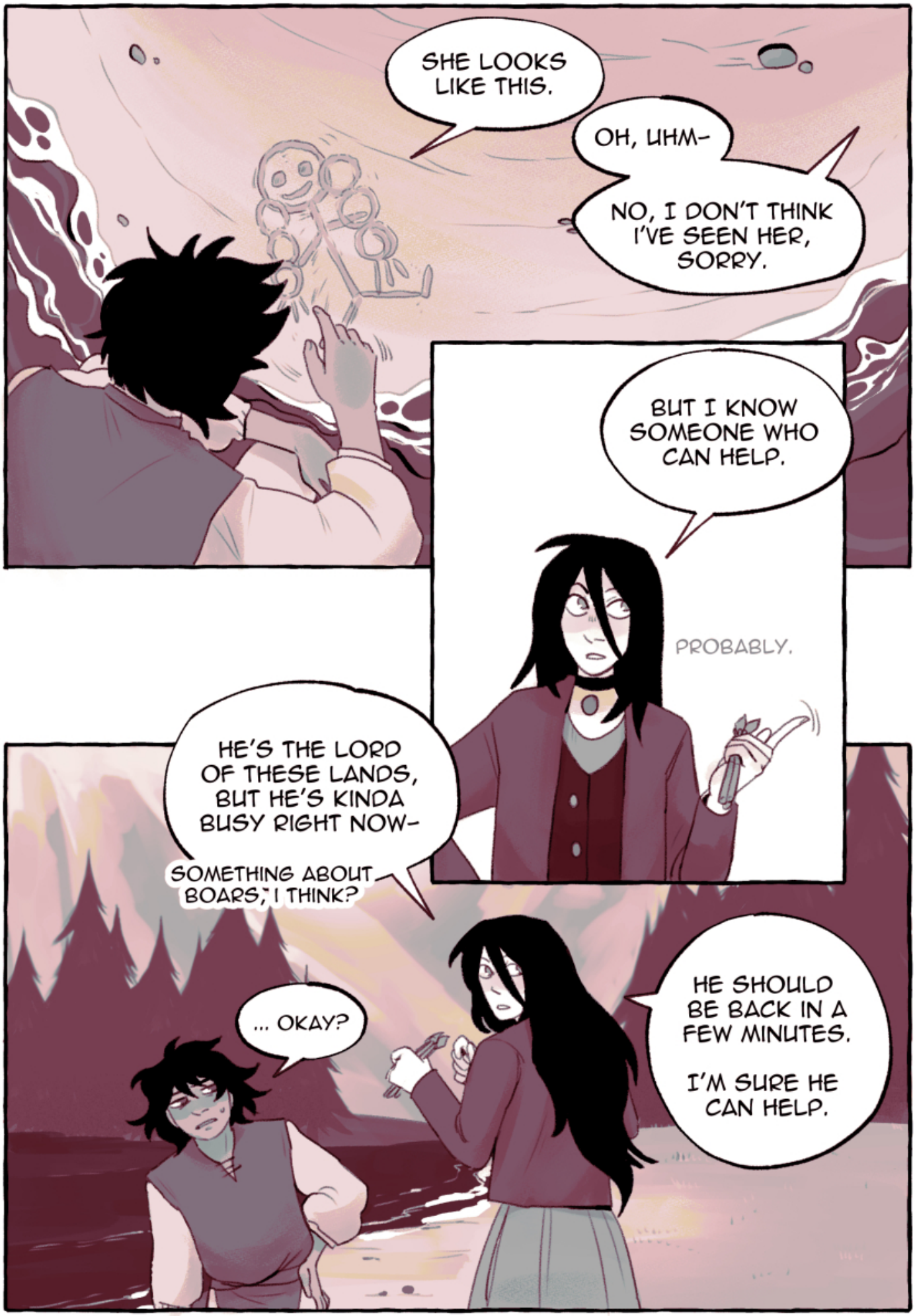

WE REALLY SPEND A LOT OF TIME TOGETHER...
I WONDER IF HE HAS ANY OTHER FRIENDS? HE SEEMS TO BE A BIT OF A LONER.
AH WELL, AVA, THAT'S EASY FOR YOU TO SAY.
MOVING TO THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE TO RUN AWAY FROM EVERYTHING... HOPING THAT THINGS WILL SORT THEMSELVES OUT.
I DON'T EVEN REMEMBER MY DEAD HUSBAND'S NAME - OR WHAT HE LOOKED LIKE.
HEH... MIGHT BE LOSING MY MIND UP HERE IN THE MOUNTAINS.

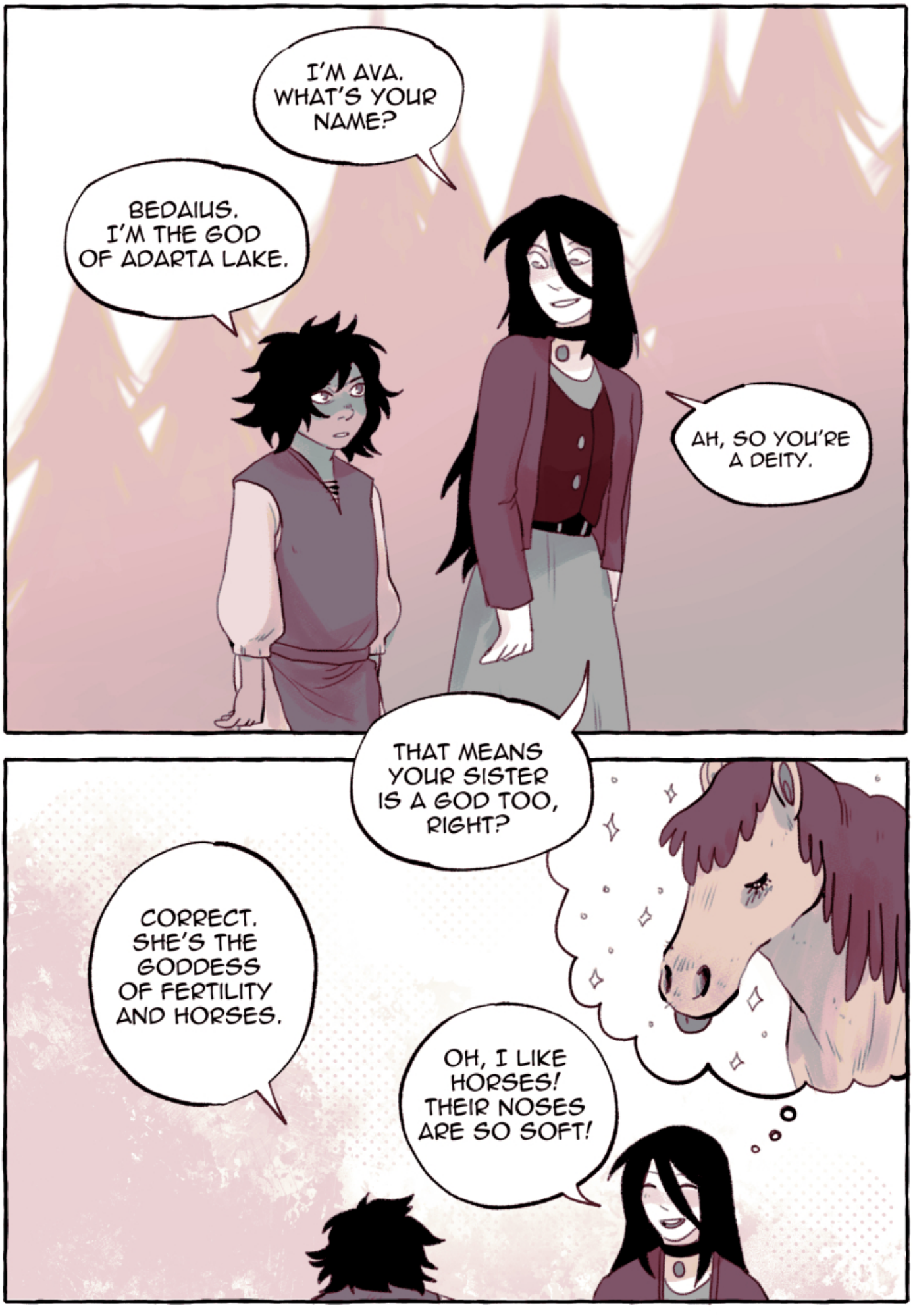
HUH?

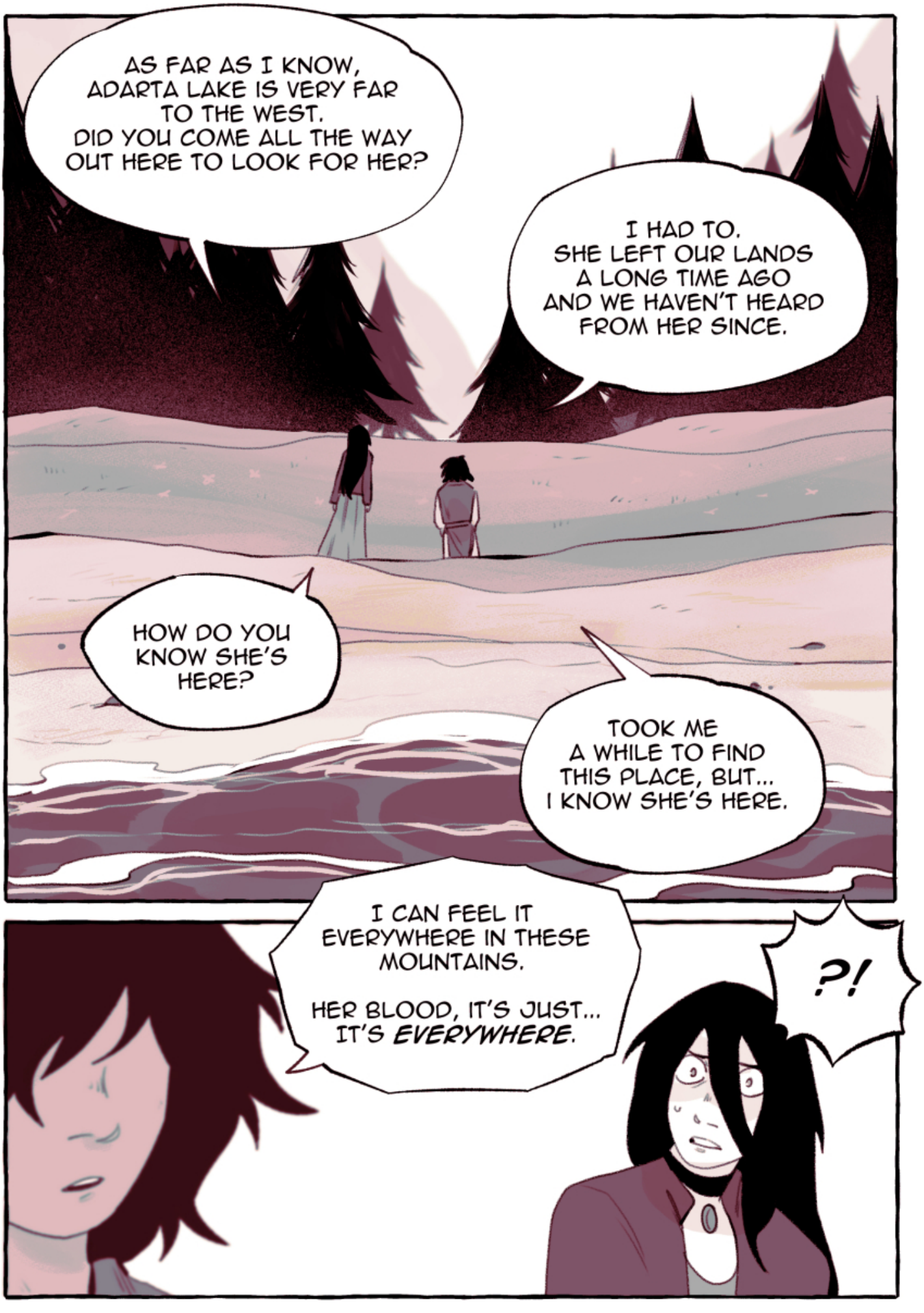
UHM...
HELLO.
HEY.

CAN I HELP YOU?
HMM...
WELL-
MAYBE.

I'M LOOKING FOR MY SISTER.
YOUR SISTER?
HAVE YOU SEEN HER?


SHE LOOKS LIKE THIS.
OH, UHM-
NO, I DON'T THINK I'VE SEEN HER, SORRY.
BUT I KNOW SOMEONE WHO CAN HELP.
PROBABLY.
HE'S THE LORD OF THESE LANDS, BUT HE'S KINDA BUSY RIGHT NOW-
SOMETHING ABOUT BOARS, I THINK?
... OKAY?
HE SHOULD BE BACK IN A FEW MINUTES.
I'M SURE HE CAN HELP.


I'M AVA. WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
BEDAIUS. I'M THE GOD OF ADARTA LAKE.
AH, SO YOU'RE A DEITY.
THAT MEANS YOUR SISTER IS A GOD TOO, RIGHT?
CORRECT. SHE'S THE GODDESS OF FERTILITY AND HORSES.
OH, I LIKE HORSES! THEIR NOSES ARE SO SOFT!

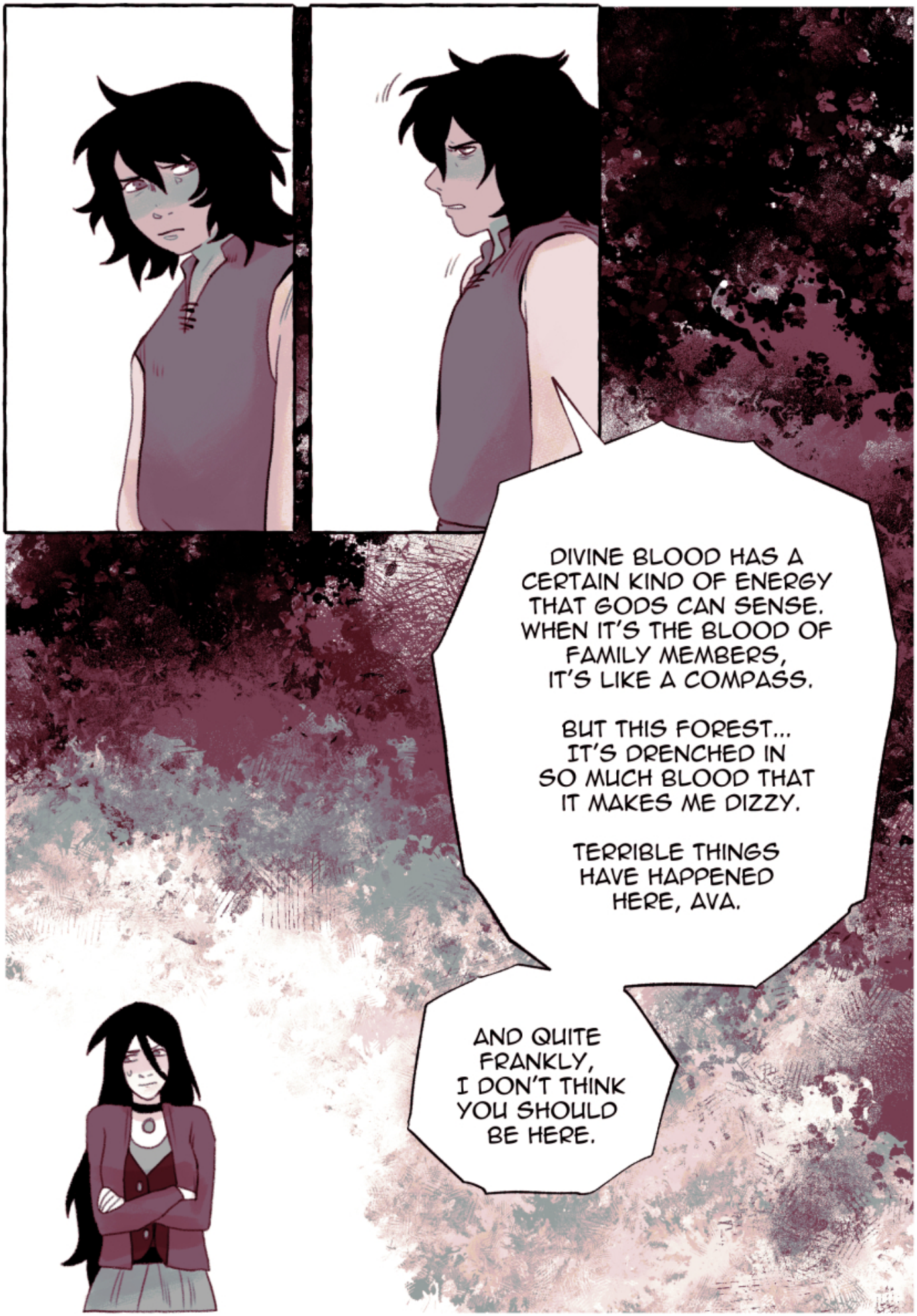

AS FAR AS I KNOW, ADARTA LAKE IS VERY FAR TO THE WEST. DID YOU COME ALL THE WAY OUT HERE TO LOOK FOR HER?
I HAD TO. SHE LEFT OUR LANDS A LONG TIME AGO AND WE HAVEN'T HEARD FROM HER SINCE.
HOW DO YOU KNOW SHE'S HERE?
TOOK ME A WHILE TO FIND THIS PLACE, BUT... I KNOW SHE'S HERE.
I CAN FEEL IT EVERYWHERE IN THESE MOUNTAINS.
HER BLOOD, IT'S JUST... IT'S *EVERYWHERE*.
?!

I DON'T NOW WHY SHE LEFT.
BUT I NEED TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO HER.

I NEED TO KNOW WHY EPONA DIDN'T COME HOME.

WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO SAY TO THIS...?
I FEEL SORRY FOR HIM...
YOU KNOW, I, UH-
I KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO LOOSE A SISTER. TWO, IN FACT.
SO, UH, I'M SORRY YOU HAVE TO GO THROUGH THIS.
LOOSING SOMEONE YOU LOVE... IT TAKES AWAY A PART OF YOU THAT NEVER REALLY HEALS.
IT'S A VERY UNIQUE PAIN THAT CHANGES YOU FOREVER.
AND THAT PAIN NEVER GOES AWAY.

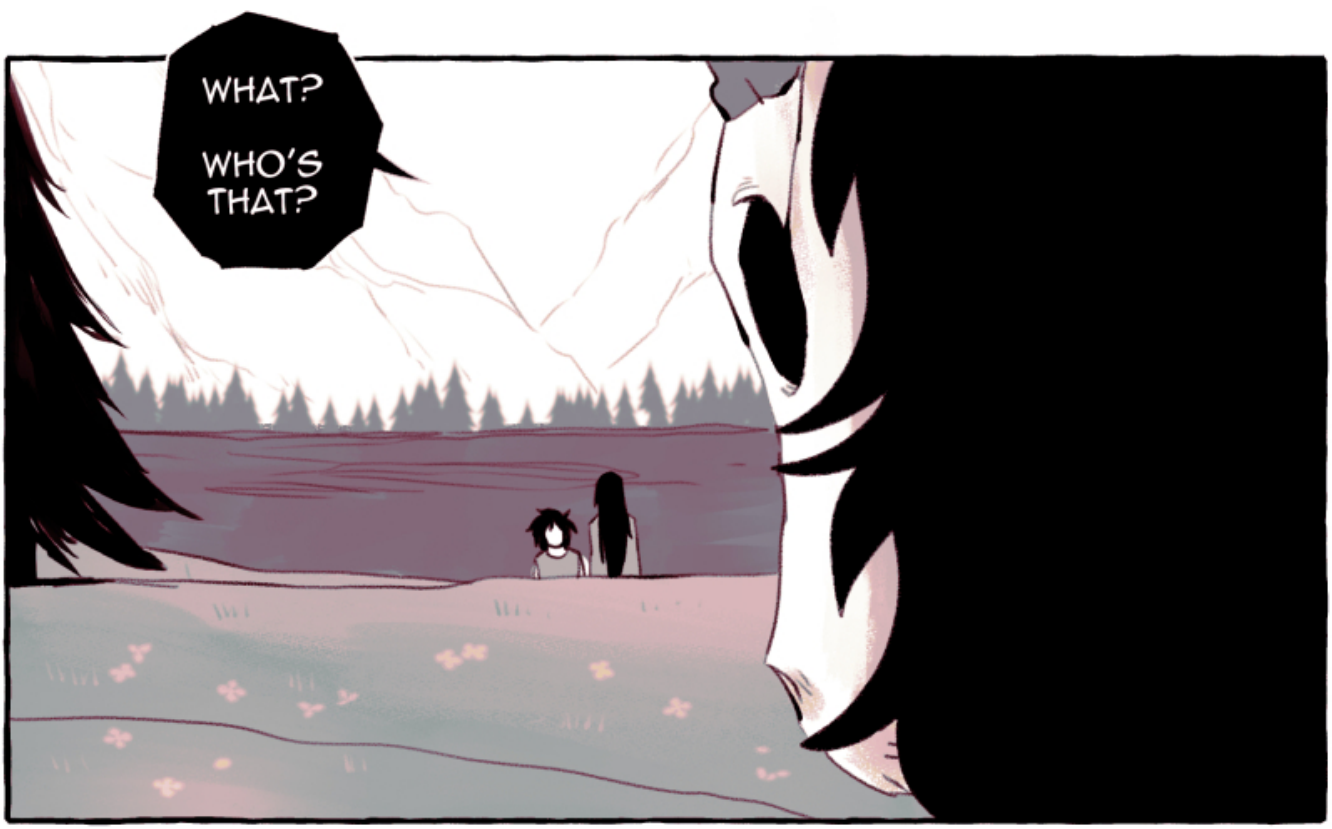
AND WHO KNOWS-
MAYBE THERE IS AN EXPLANATION FOR ALL THIS!
MAYBE YOUR SISTER IS FINE!


DIVINE BLOOD HAS A CERTAIN KIND OF ENERGY THAT GODS CAN SENSE. WHEN IT'S THE BLOOD OF FAMILY MEMBERS, IT'S LIKE A COMPASS.
BUT THIS FOREST... IT'S DRENCHED IN SO MUCH BLOOD THAT IT MAKES ME DIZZY.
TERRIBLE THINGS HAVE HAPPENED HERE, AVA.
AND QUITE FRANKLY, I DON'T THINK YOU SHOULD BE HERE.

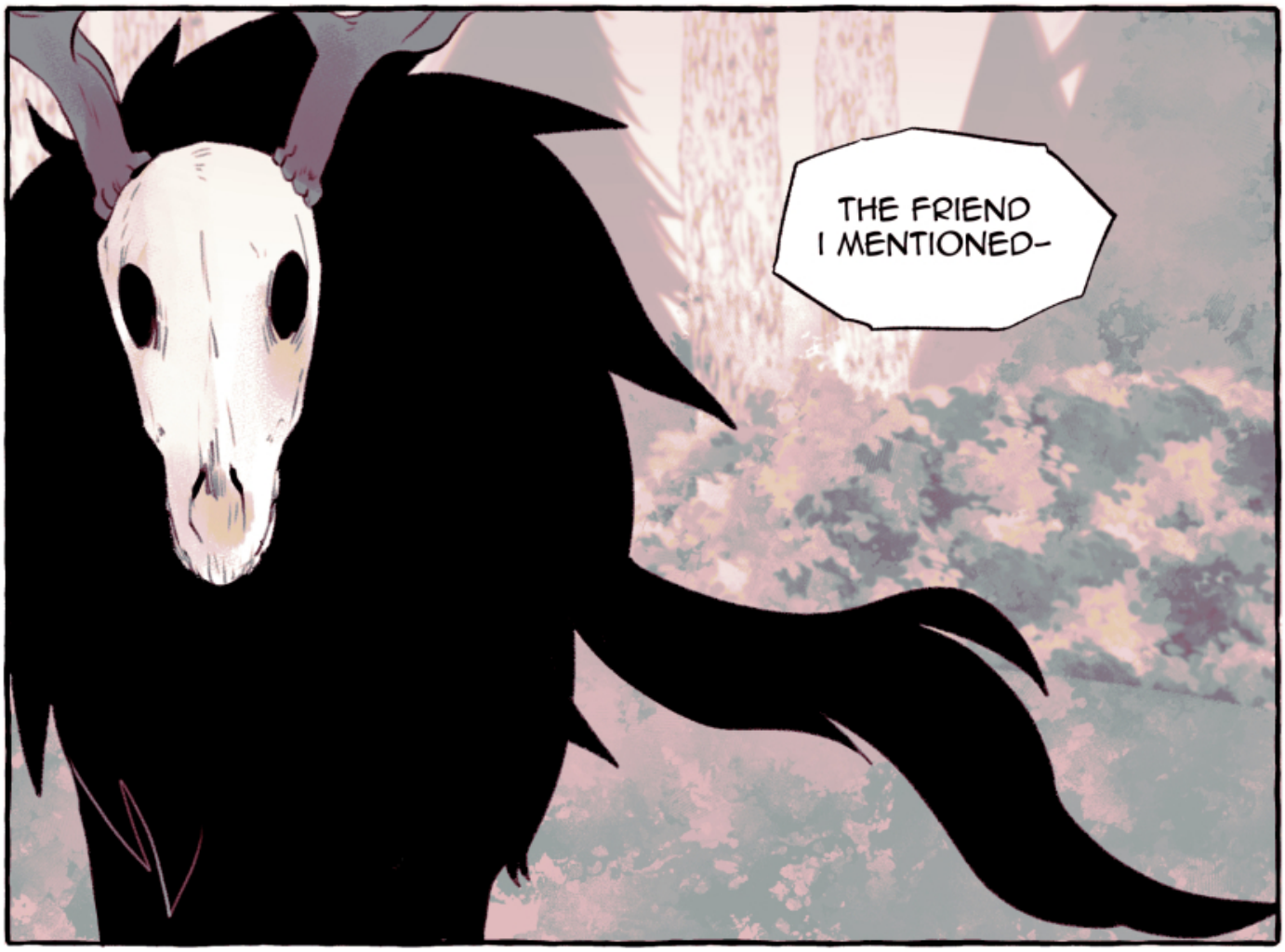
... IT'S ALRIGHT. I HAVE SOMEONE WHO PROTECTS ME.
HE'S A BIT OF A MYSTERIOUS GUY, BUT I KNOW HE'S A GOOD PERSON.
I HAVE NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT WHEN HE'S AROUND.

WELL THAT WAS A BIG WASTE OF TIME.
... NOT AS IF THESE ANIMALS EVER LISTEN TO ME ANYWAY.

SHAKE
SHAKE
MY FUR IS GOING TO SMELL LIKE BOAR FOR A WEEK, EUGH-

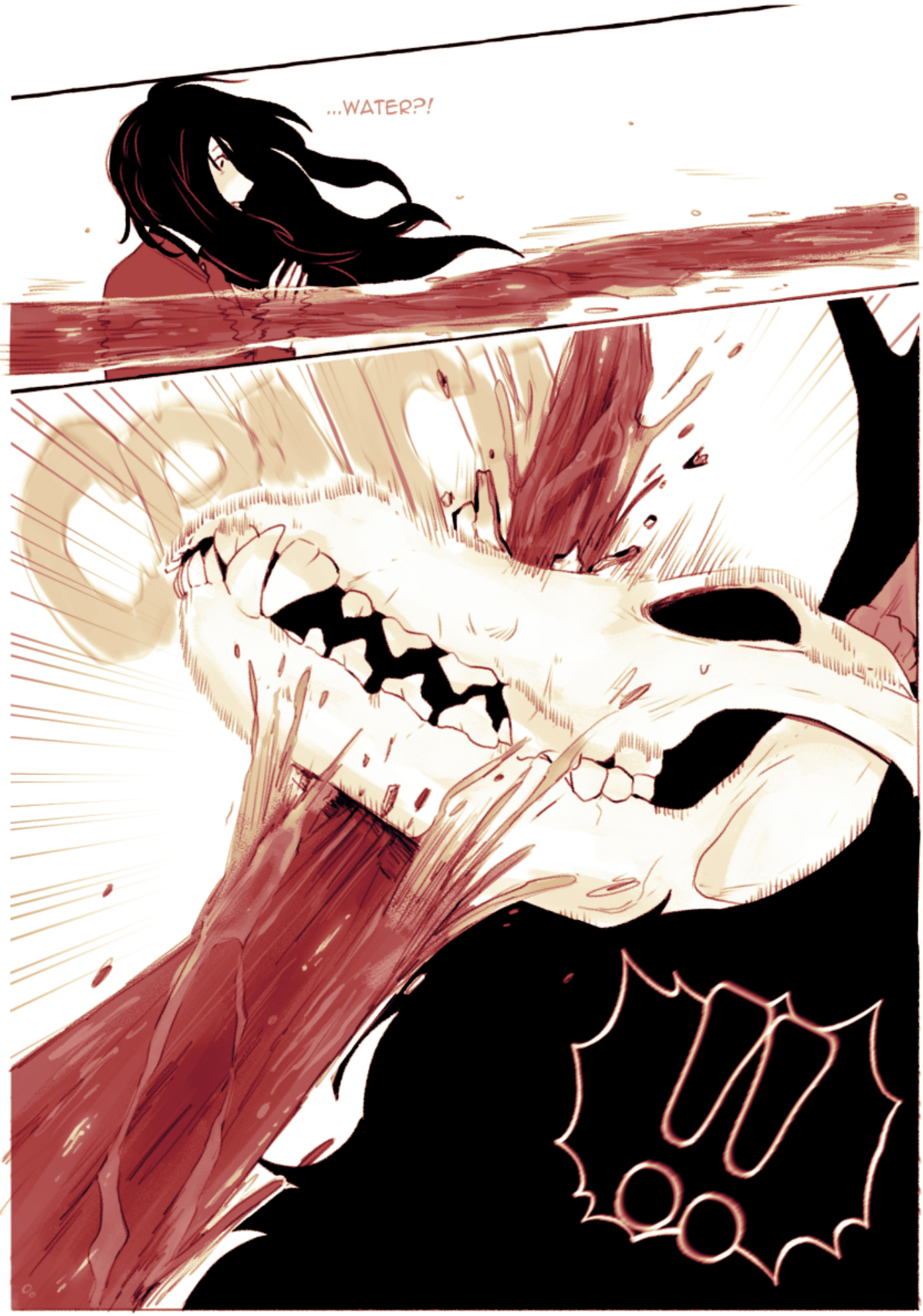

WHAT?
WHO'S THAT?

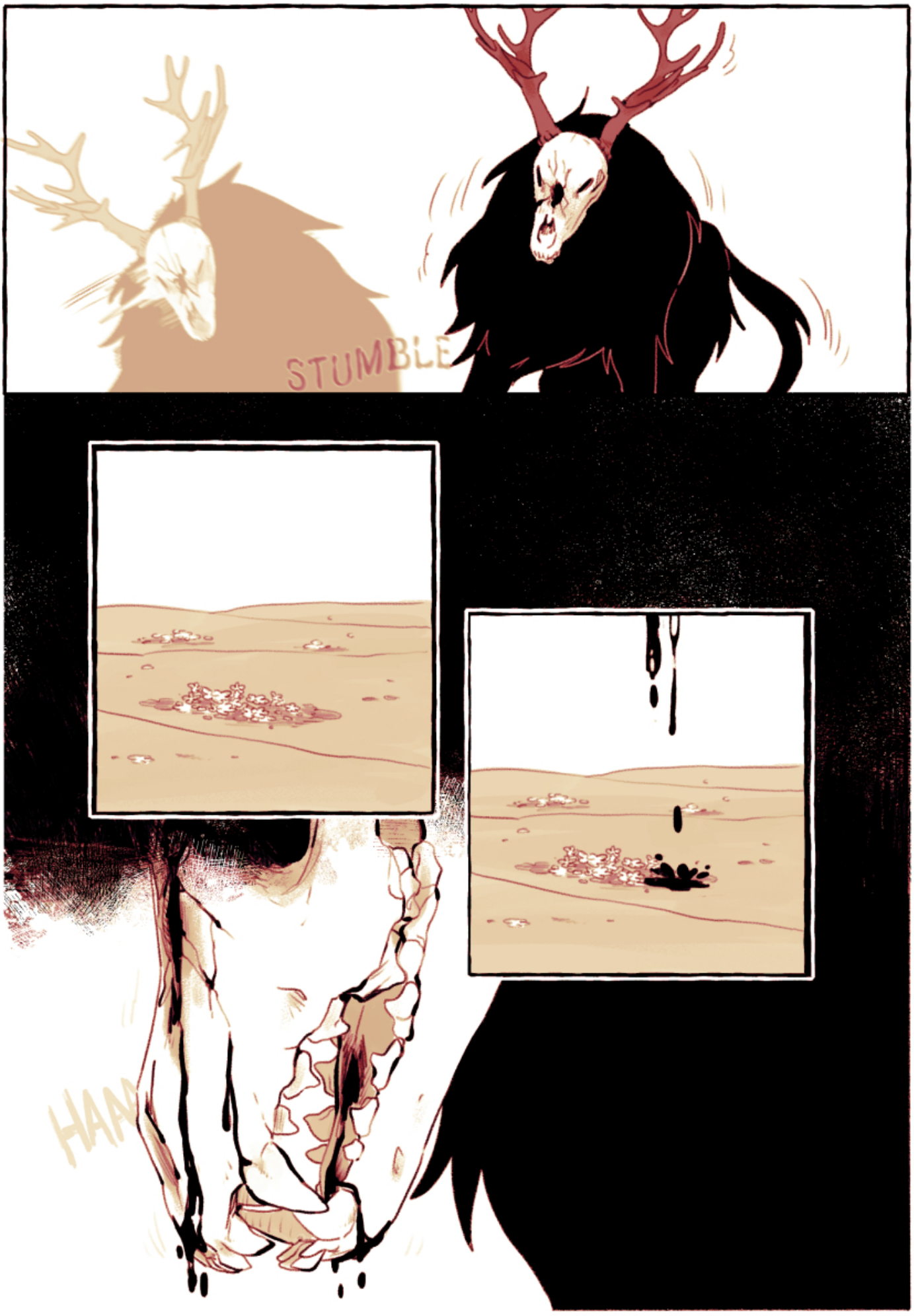
I'M SURE EVERYTHING'S GONNA BE FINE.
OH-!
THERE HE IS!


THE FRIEND I MENTIONED-

BERSERKIR!

FSSHHHH

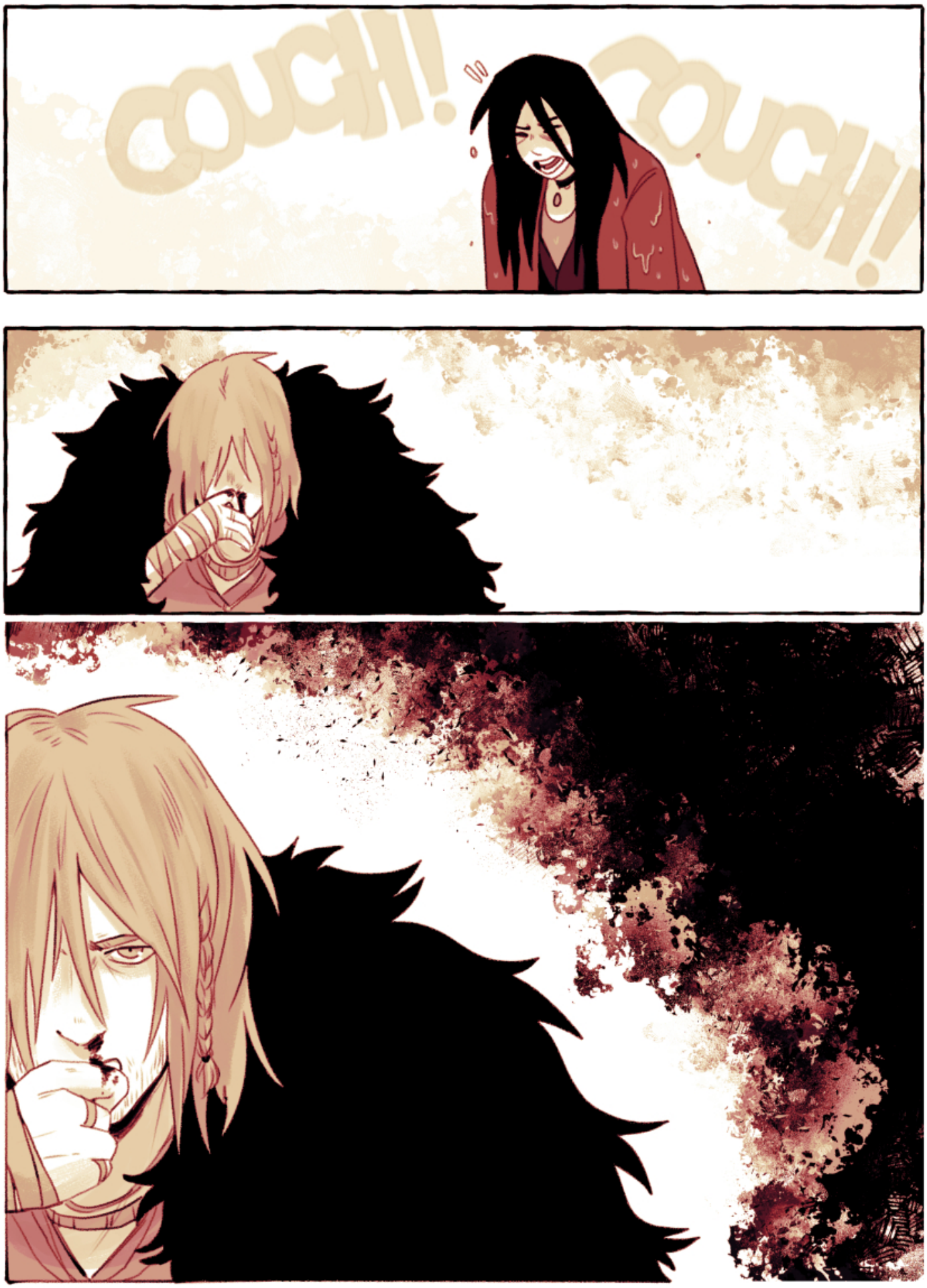

...WATER?!

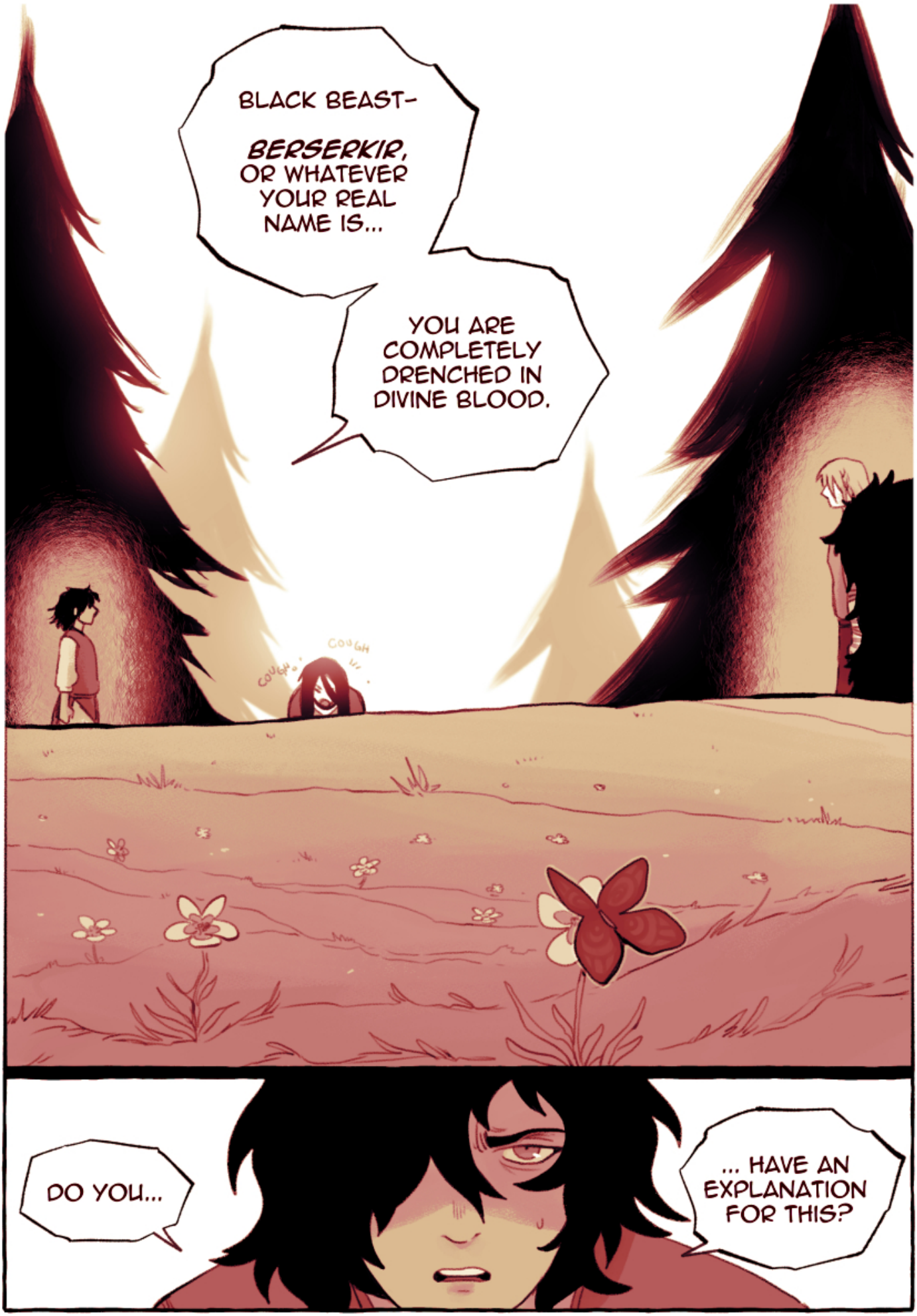

STUMBLE

?!
FSSSHHH

GASP!
HE'S BLEEDING!!
WHY THE HELL WOULD YOU DO THAT?!

DON'T GET INVOLVED, AVA.
I'D LIKE TO AVOID HURTING YOU.
HEY!
BEDAIUS, STOP-!
OUCH-!
OOF!

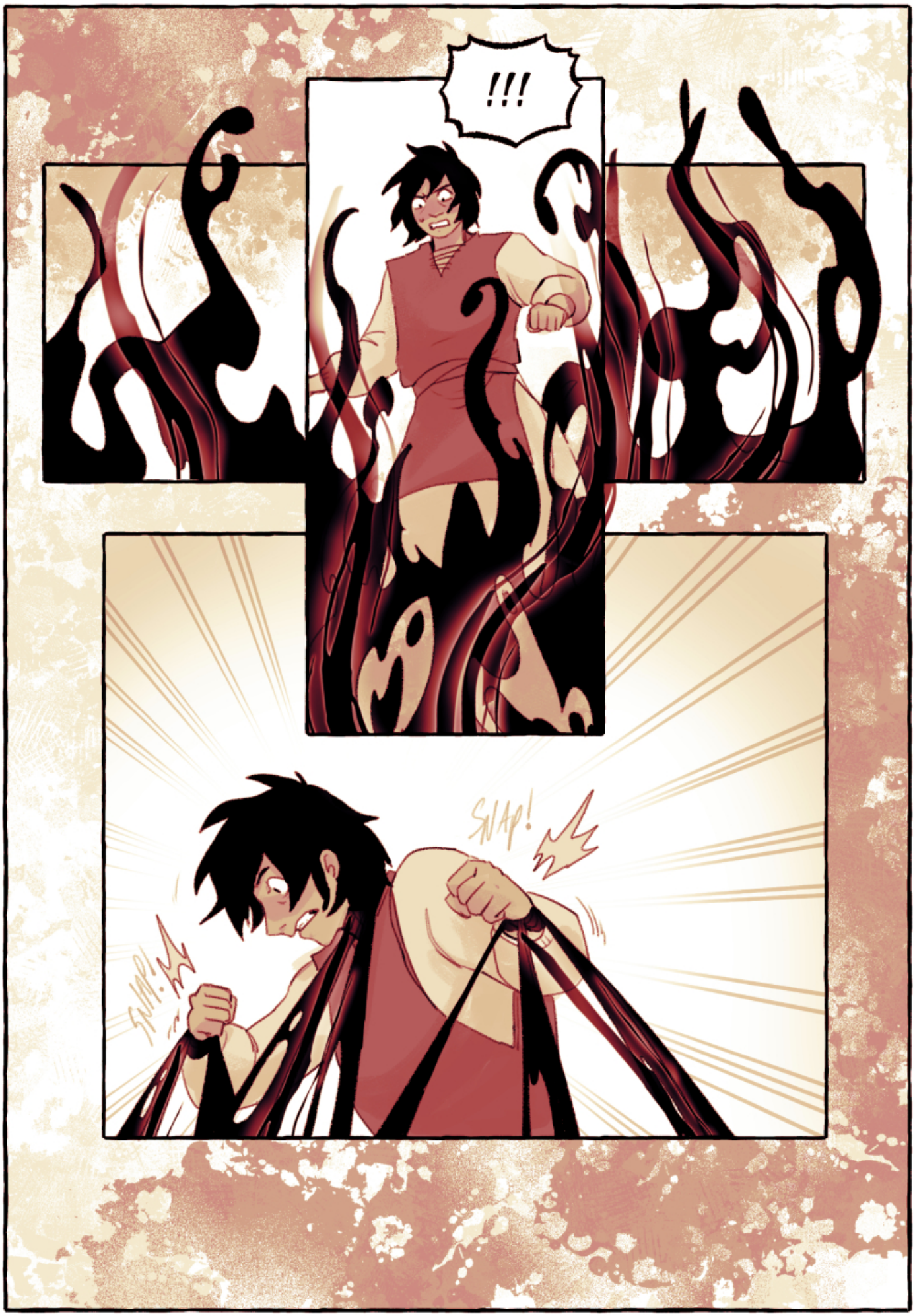

COUGH!
COUGH!


BLACK BEAST-
BERSERKIR, OR WHATEVER YOUR REAL NAME IS...
YOU ARE COMPLETELY DRENCHED IN DIVINE BLOOD.
COUGH
COUGH
DO YOU...
... HAVE AN EXPLANATION FOR THIS?

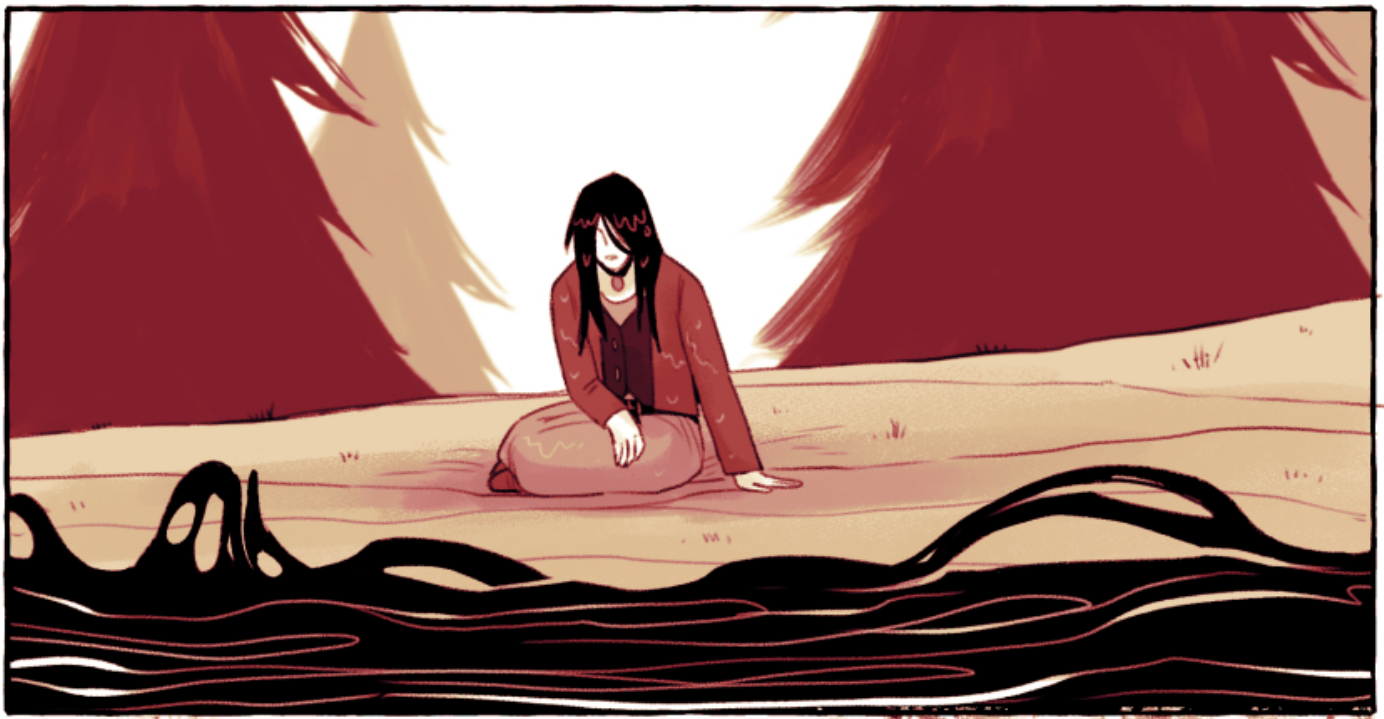
EXPLANATION?
I DON'T OWE YOU ONE, WATER SPIRIT.
FSHHH
THAT ALONE IS ENOUGH OF AN ANSWER!!

WATER?
GRIP
SO YOU THINK YOU CAN CAUSE ME TROUBLE WITH SOME WATER?

PRETTY ARROGANT, IF YOU ASK ME.


!!!
SNAP!
SNAP!

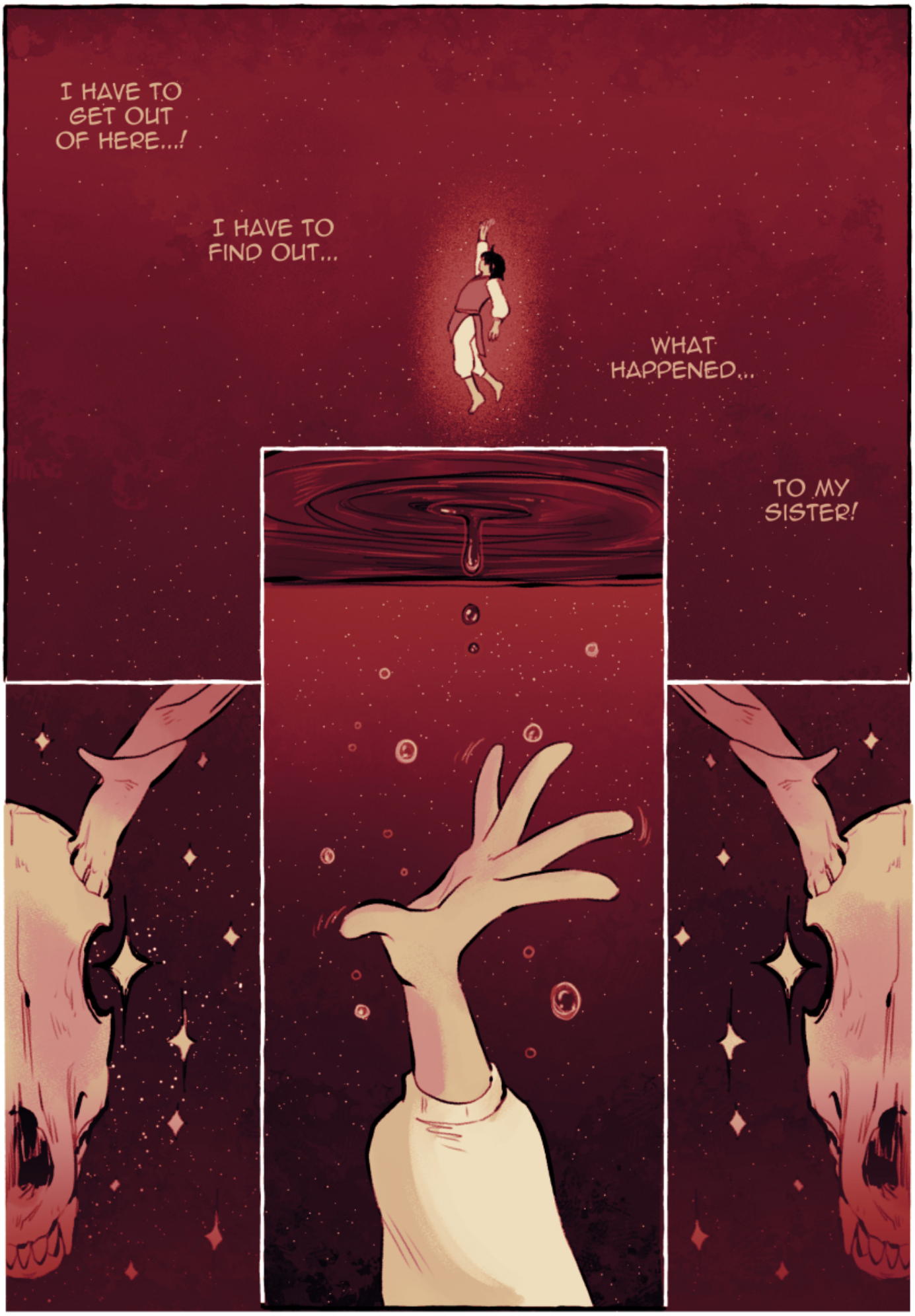
WHAT IS THIS?!
I'M BEING PULLED IN-?!
BLP!



HE'S...
...GONE?!

A SEA OF STARS...?
AUGH-!!

WHY CAN'T I BREATH IN THIS WATER..?!
THIS HAS NEVER HAPPENED BEFORE-!
I CAN'T-!!


I HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE...!
I HAVE TO FIND OUT...
WHAT HAPPENED...
TO MY SISTER!

GASP!!
Cough
Cough

HE'S BACK?!

UGHH-!

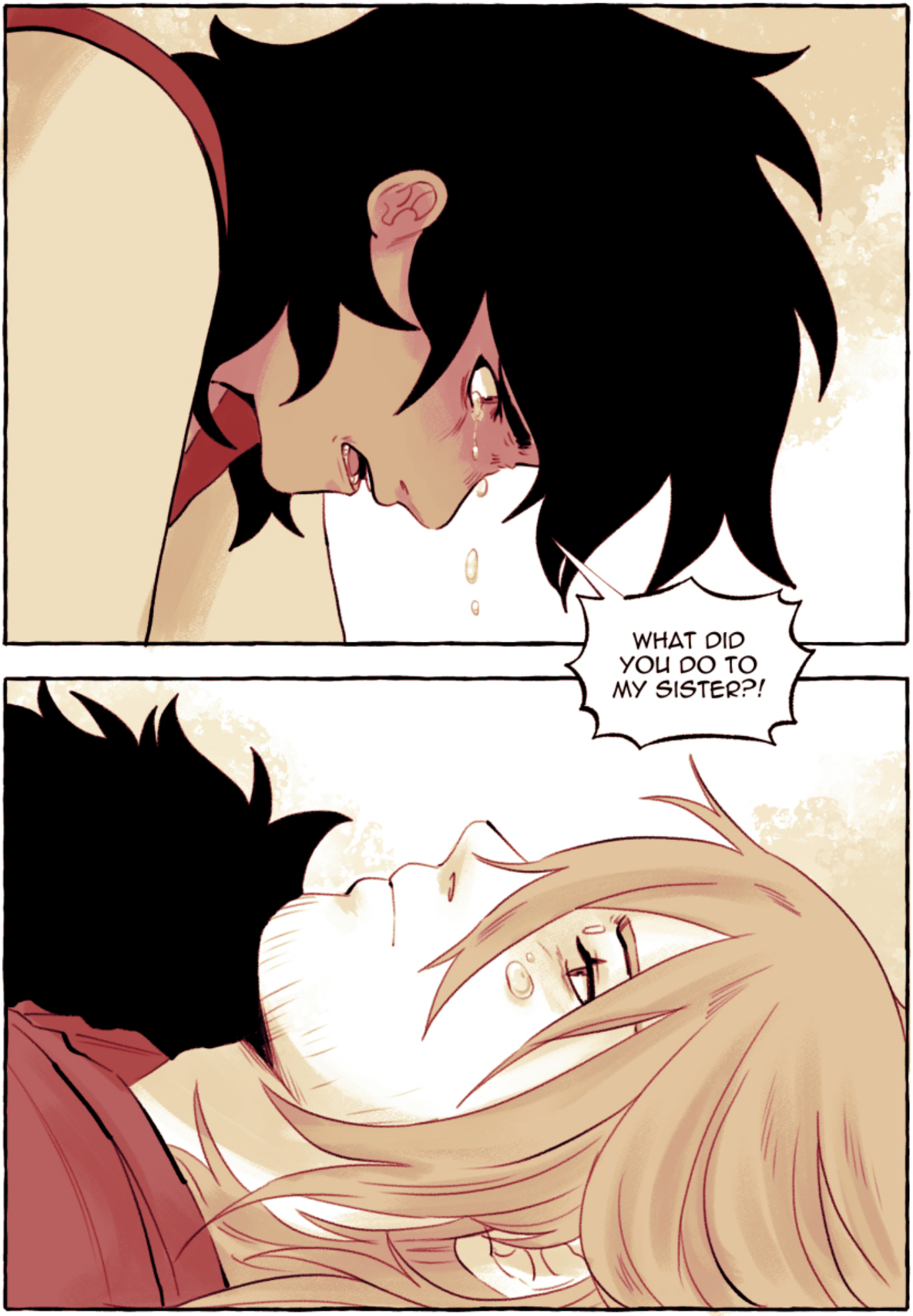
PESKY THINGS...!
A SEA OF STARS...
I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS!
WHO IS THIS GUY?!

WHATEVER HE IS...
... HE IS NO ORDINARY DEITY!!

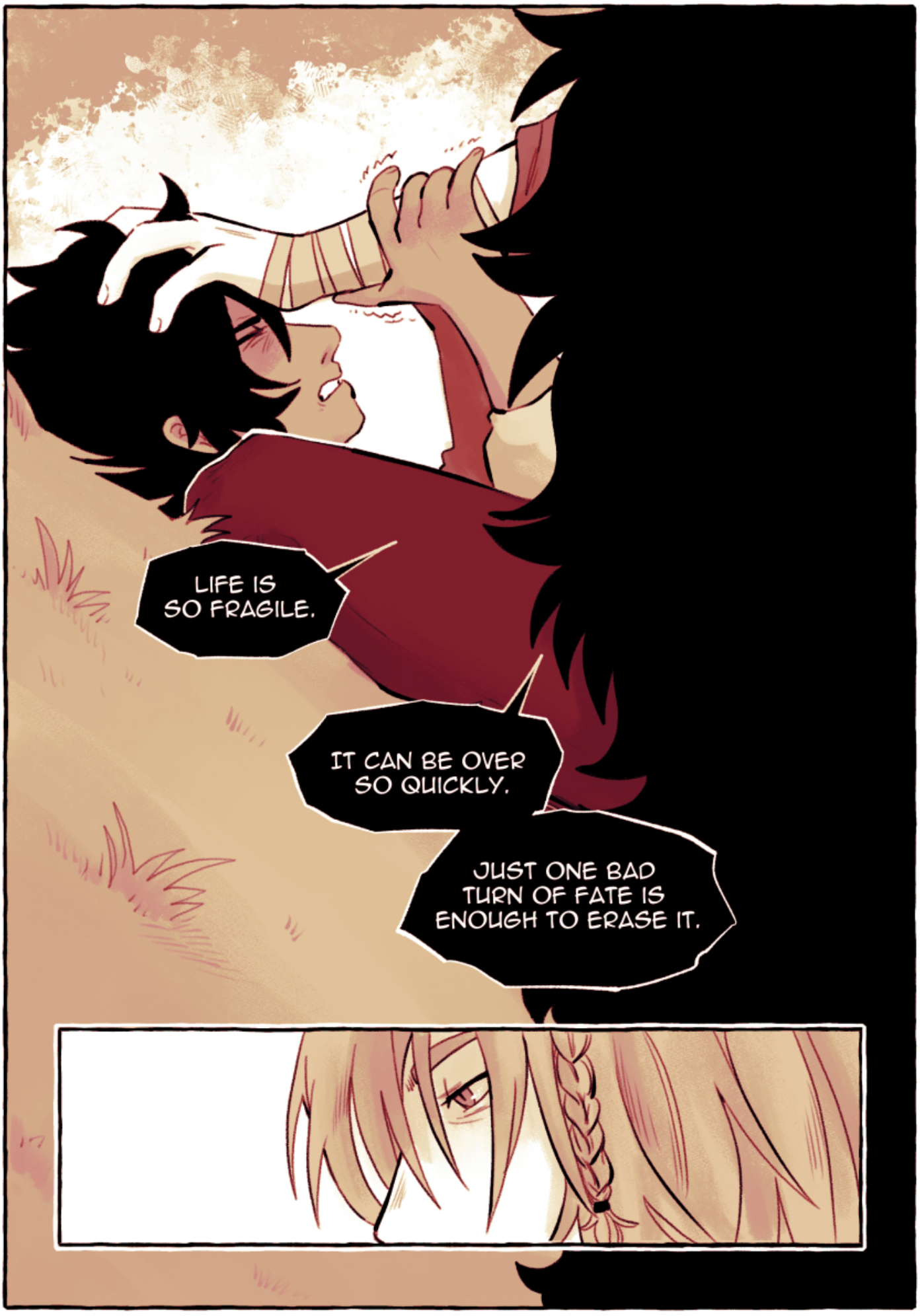
I AM SMALLER THAN HIM!
AND MOVE WAY FASTER-
IF I'M FAST ENOUGH, I CAN PROBABLY CATCH HIM BY SURPRISE-

GRAB!
HE DOESN'T EVEN TRY TO DEFEND HIMSELF-?!
POFF!

YOU REEK OF BLOOD AND DEATH...
YOU BASTARD-!

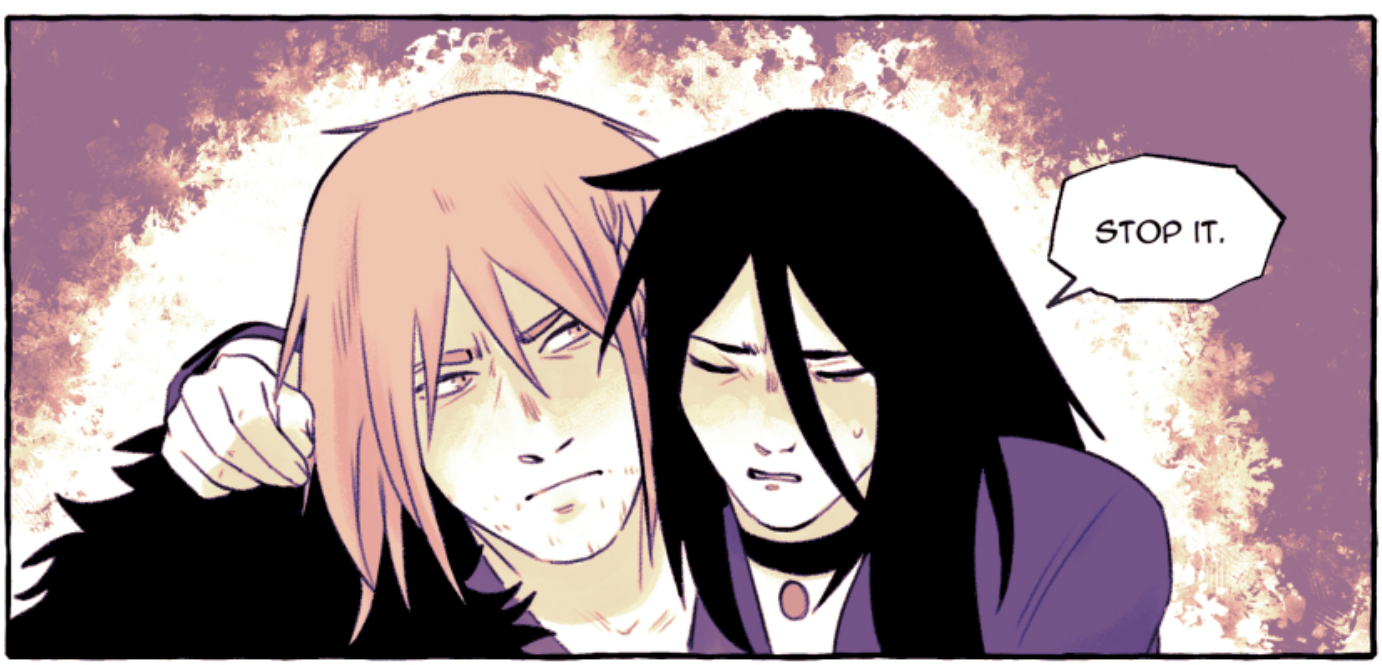

WHAT DID YOU DO TO MY SISTER?!

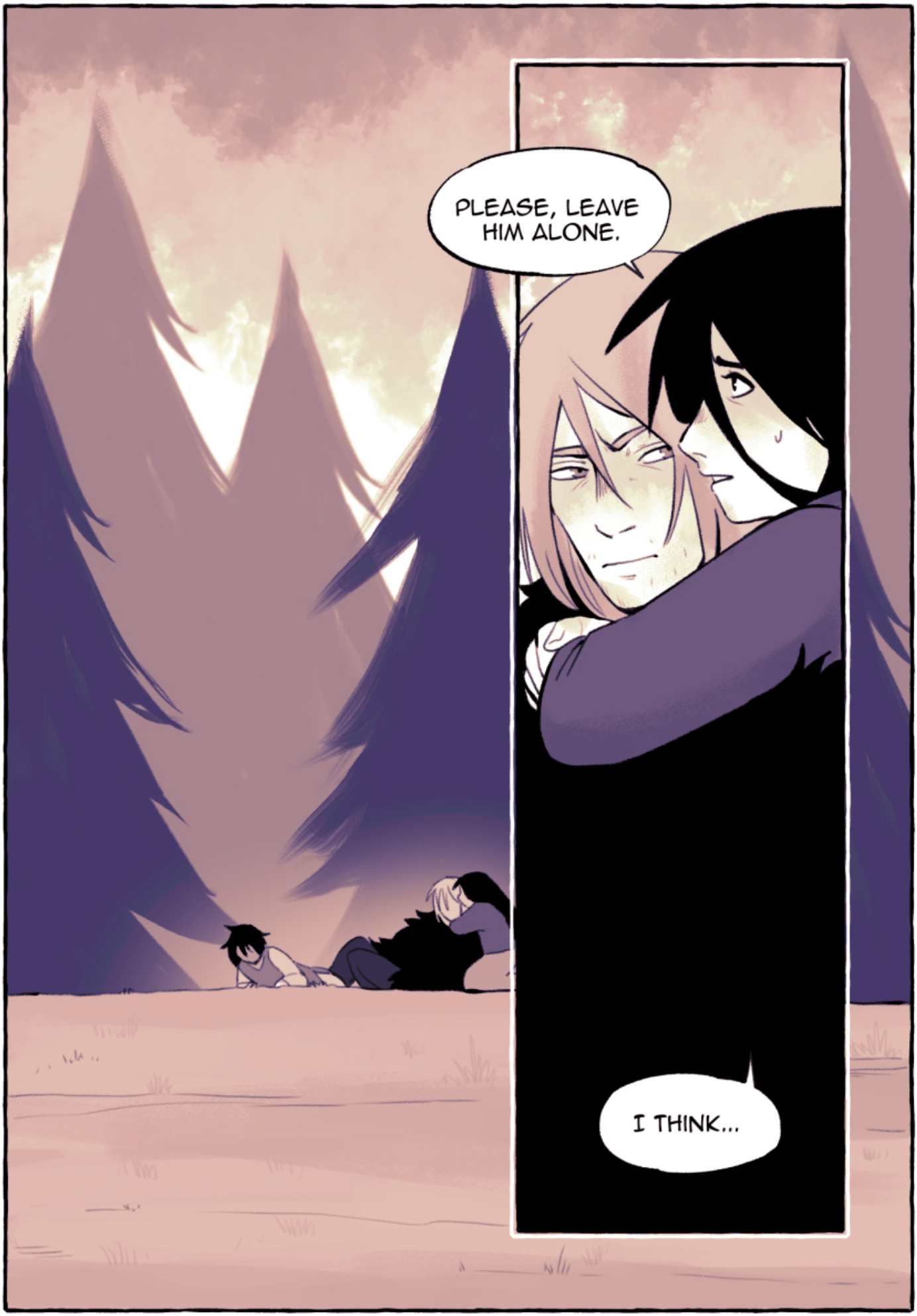
THAT'S ENOUGH.
GRAB!
THUD
OUCH-!

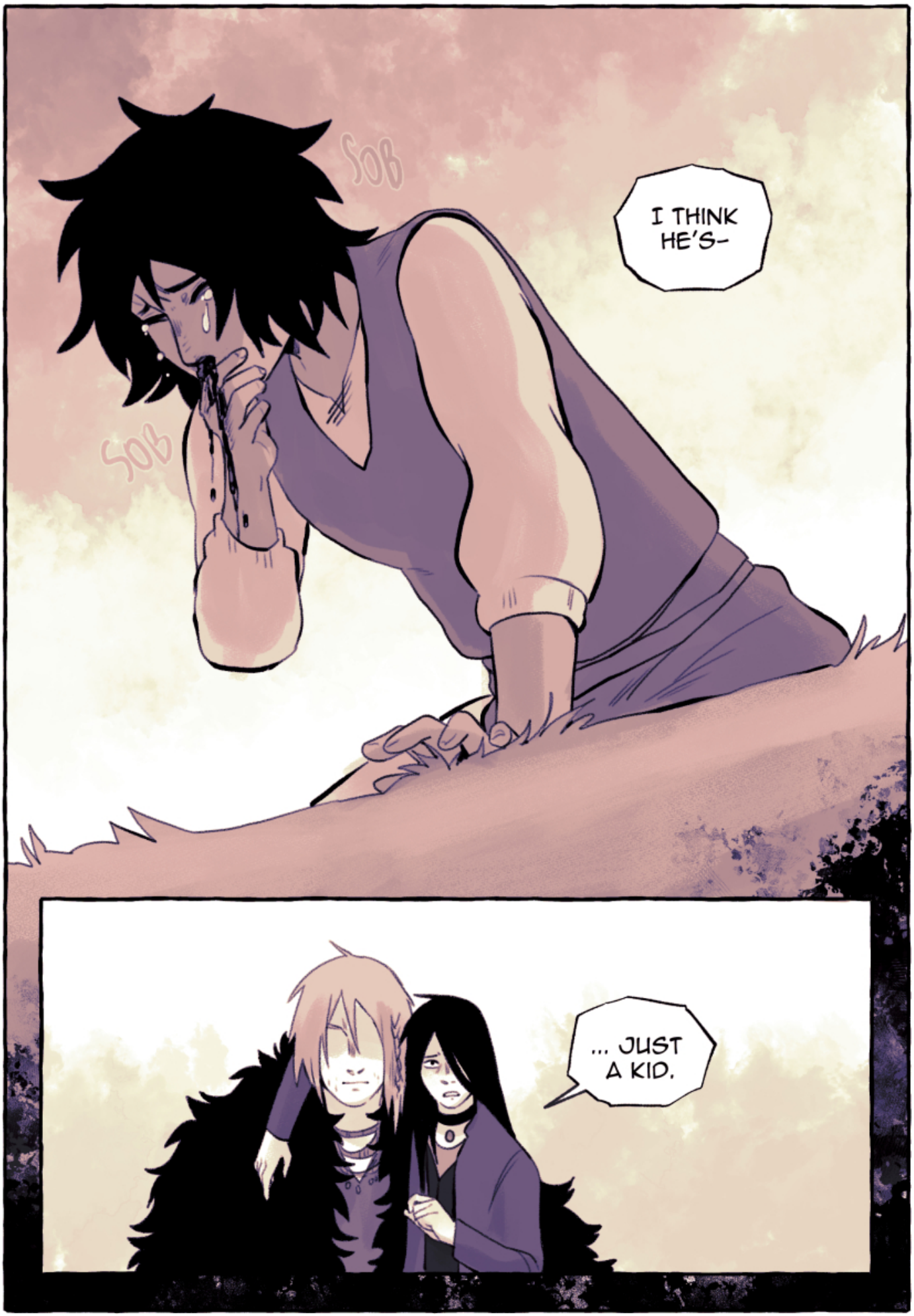

LIFE IS SO FRAGILE.
IT CAN BE OVER SO QUICKLY.
JUST ONE BAD TURN OF FATE IS ENOUGH TO ERASE IT.

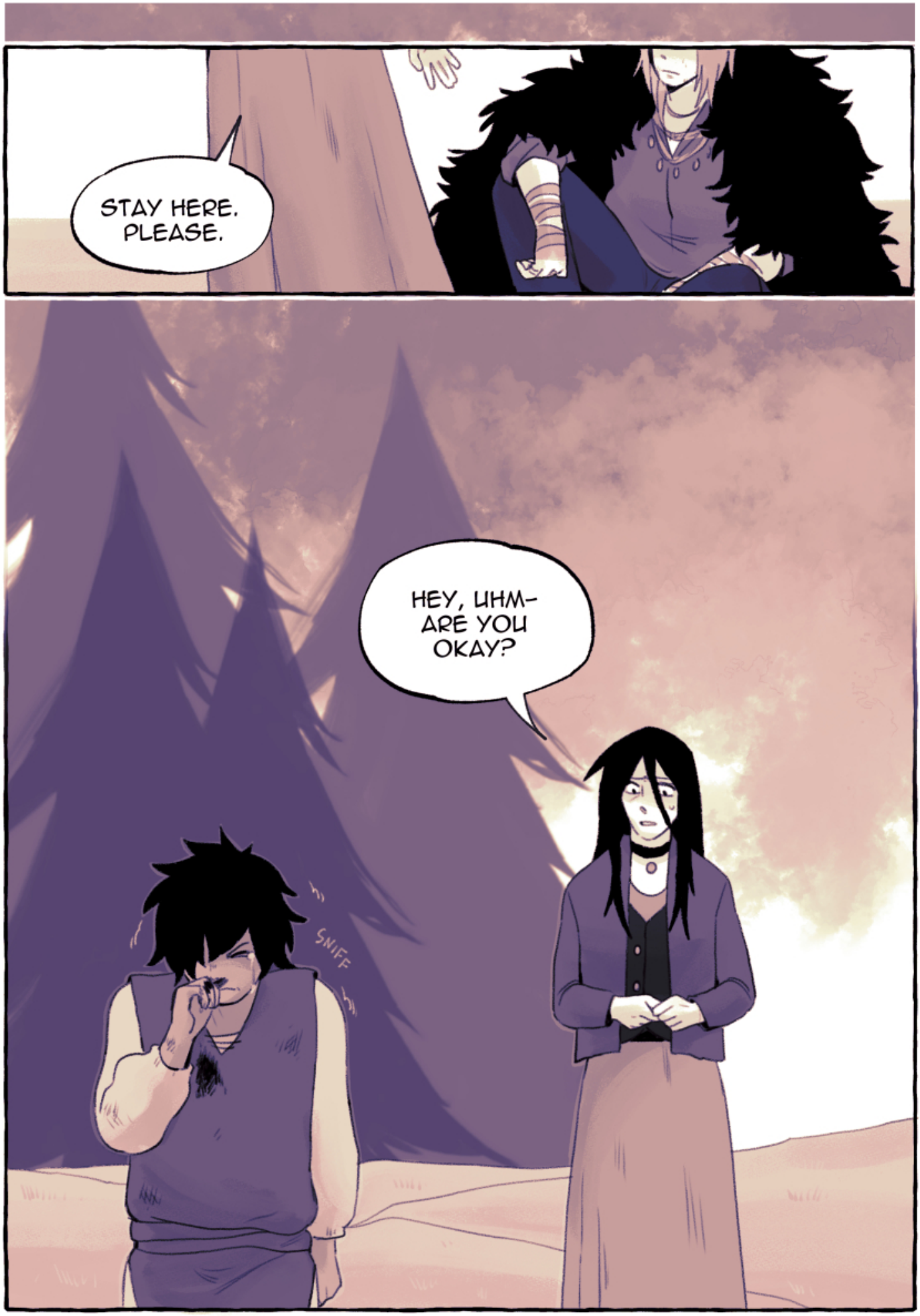
MAYBE I SHOULD TRY A LITTLE HARDER TO MAKE MY POINT CLEAR?
AGHH-!
CRACK!
GRAAHHH!!!
TO HELP CLARIFY HOW THINGS WORK HERE IN MY TERRITORY.

STOP!!

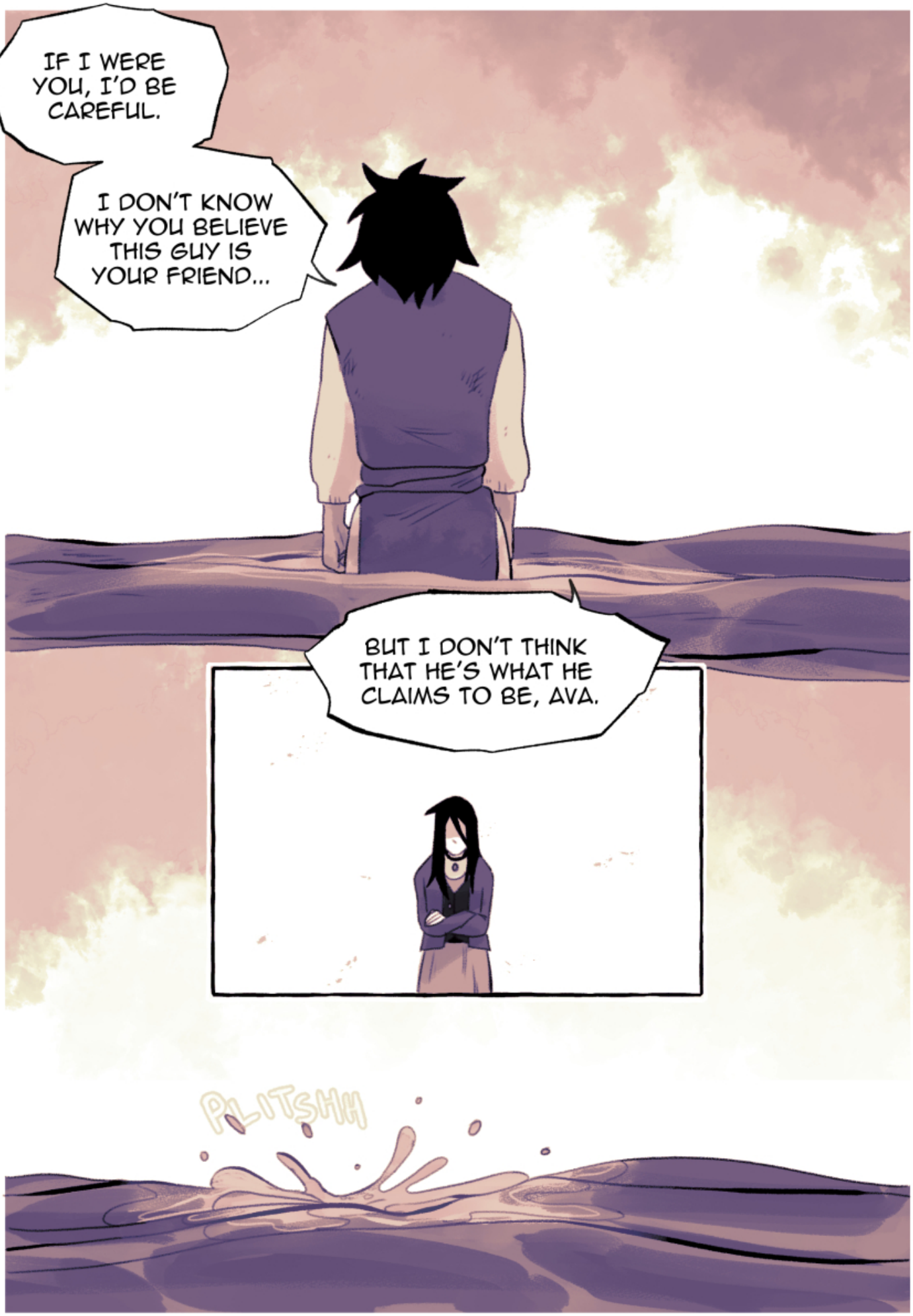

STOP IT.

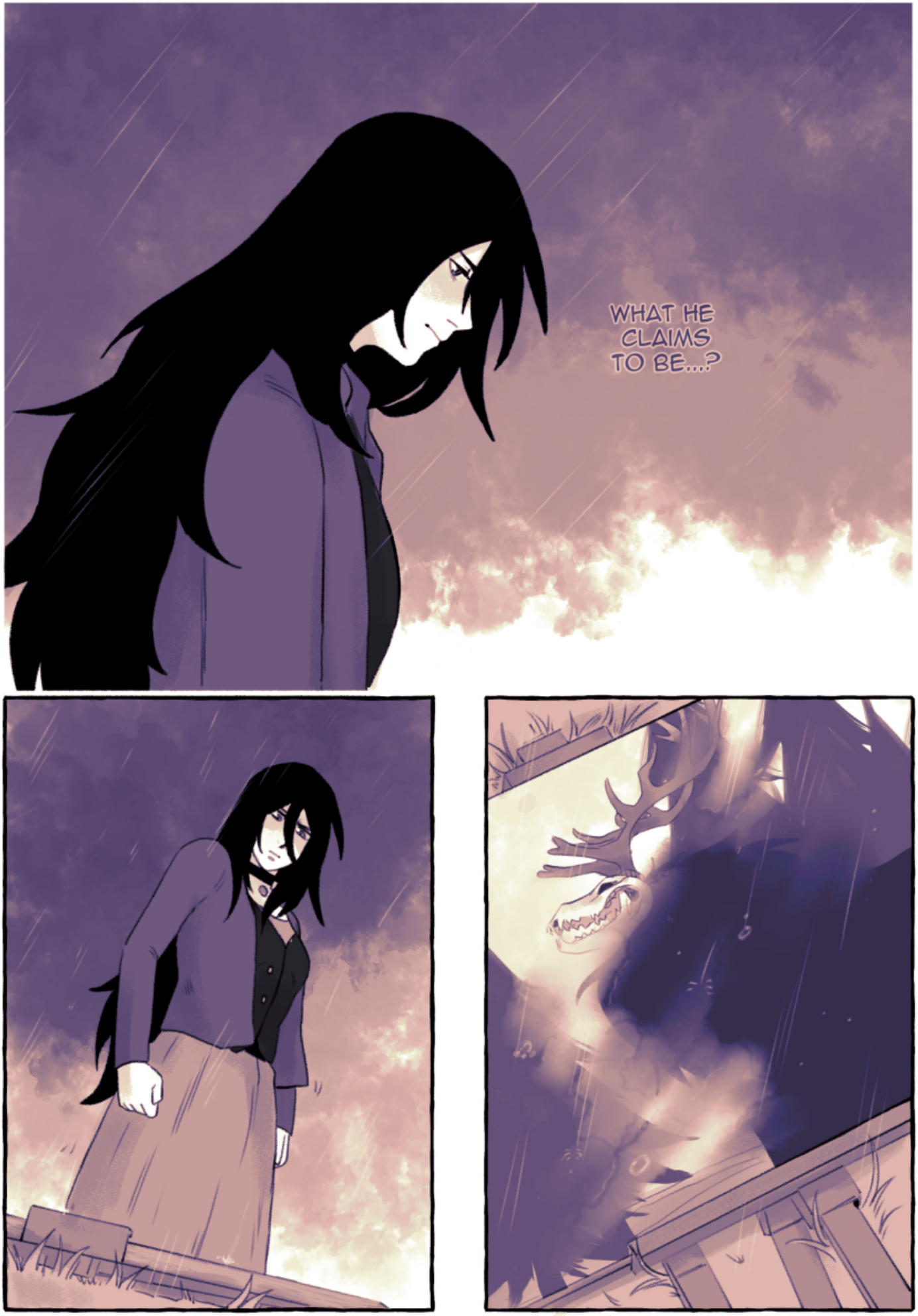

PLEASE, LEAVE HIM ALONE.
I THINK...

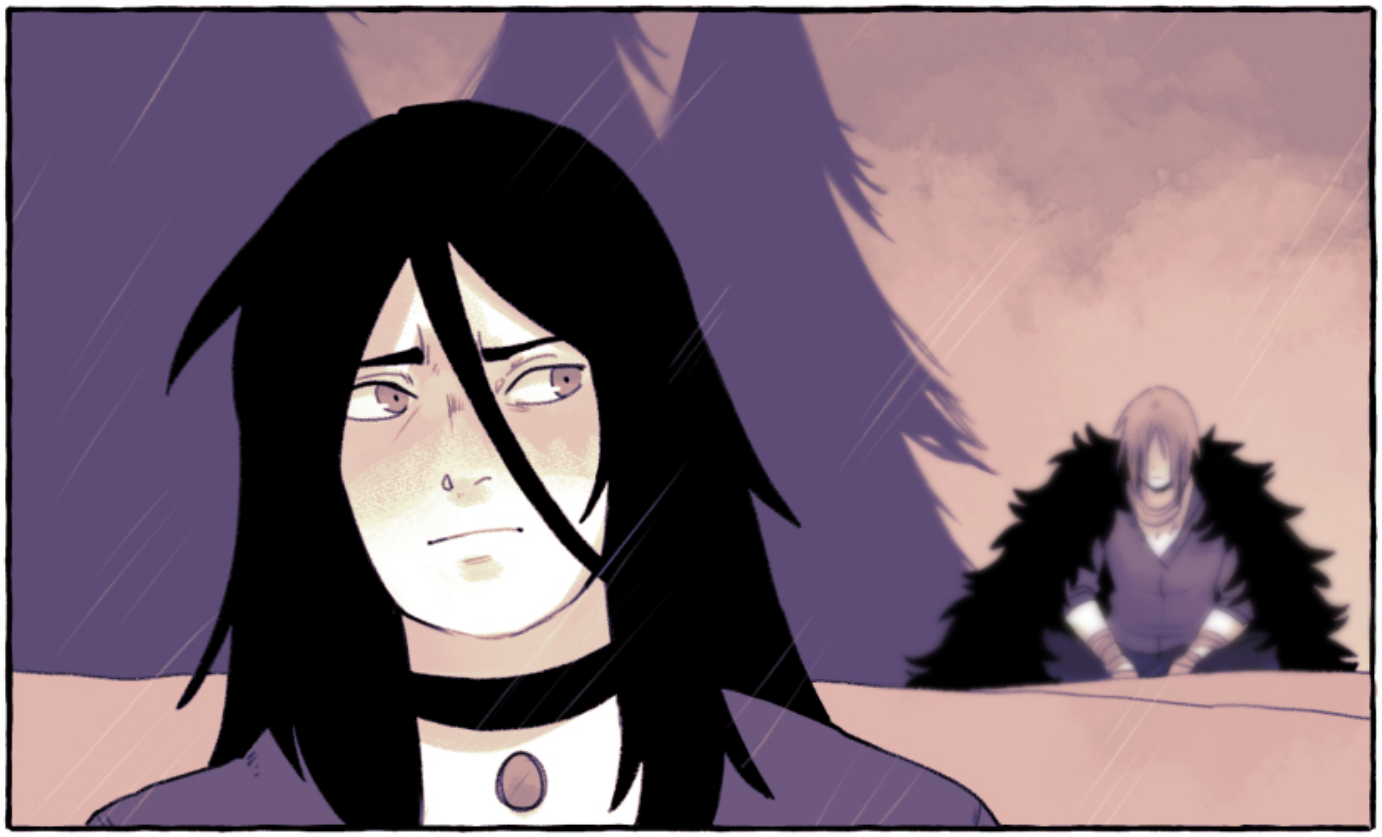

SOB
SOB
I THINK HE'S-
... JUST A KID.

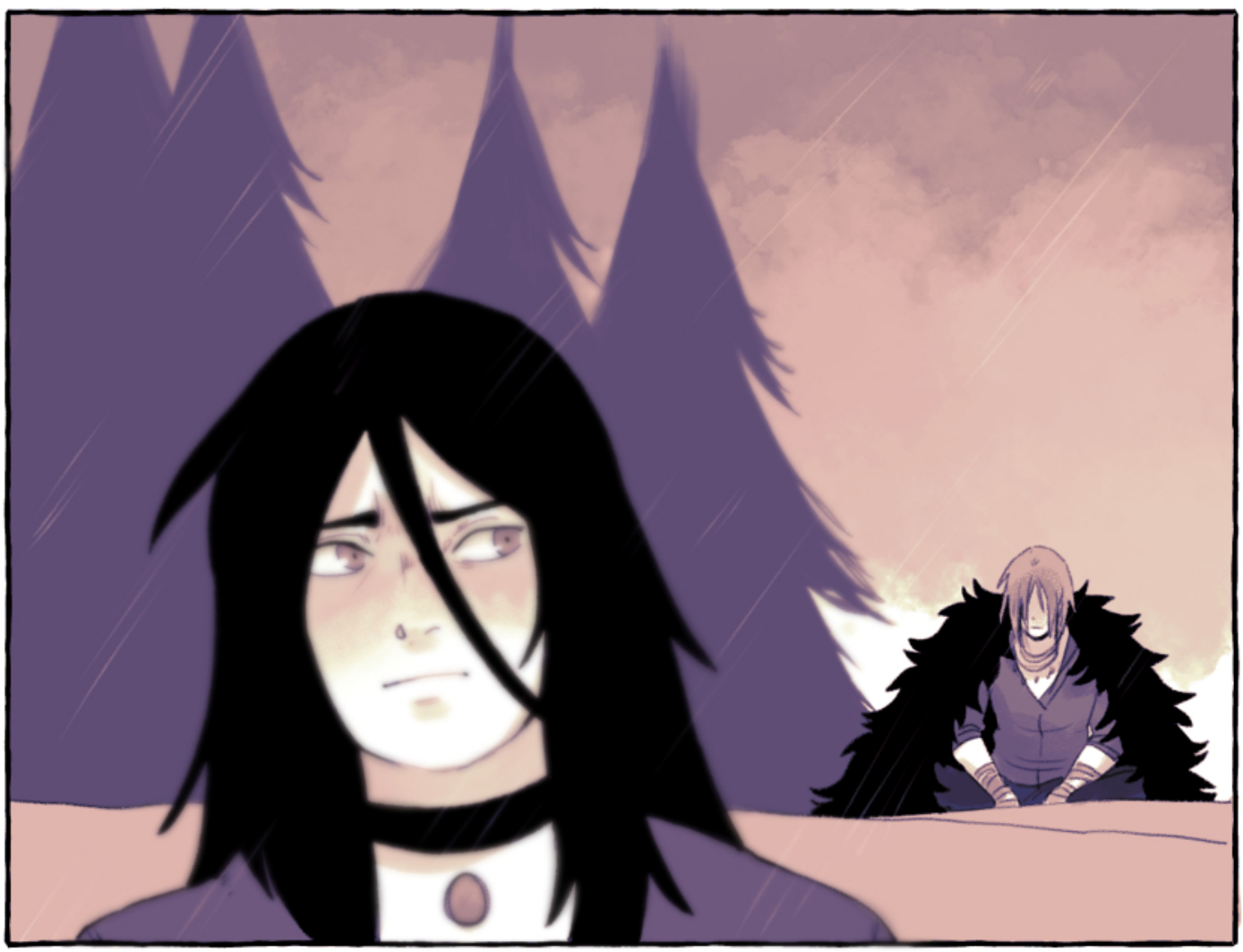

STAY HERE. PLEASE.
HEY, UHM- ARE YOU OKAY?
SNIFF

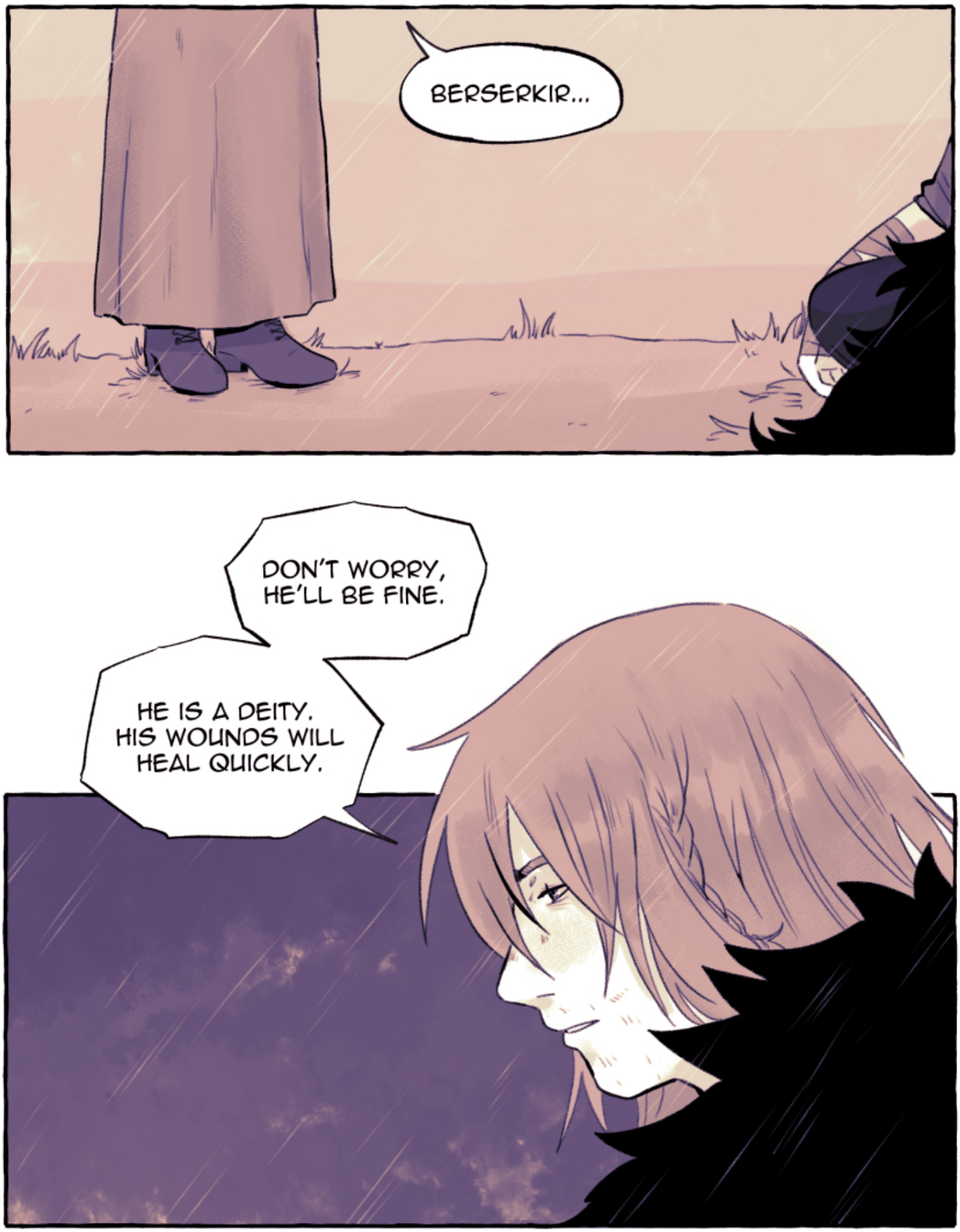
I'M SORRY ABOUT THIS-
DON'T TOUCH ME!
TSK
!
BEDAIUS, WAIT!
FSHH
WSHH

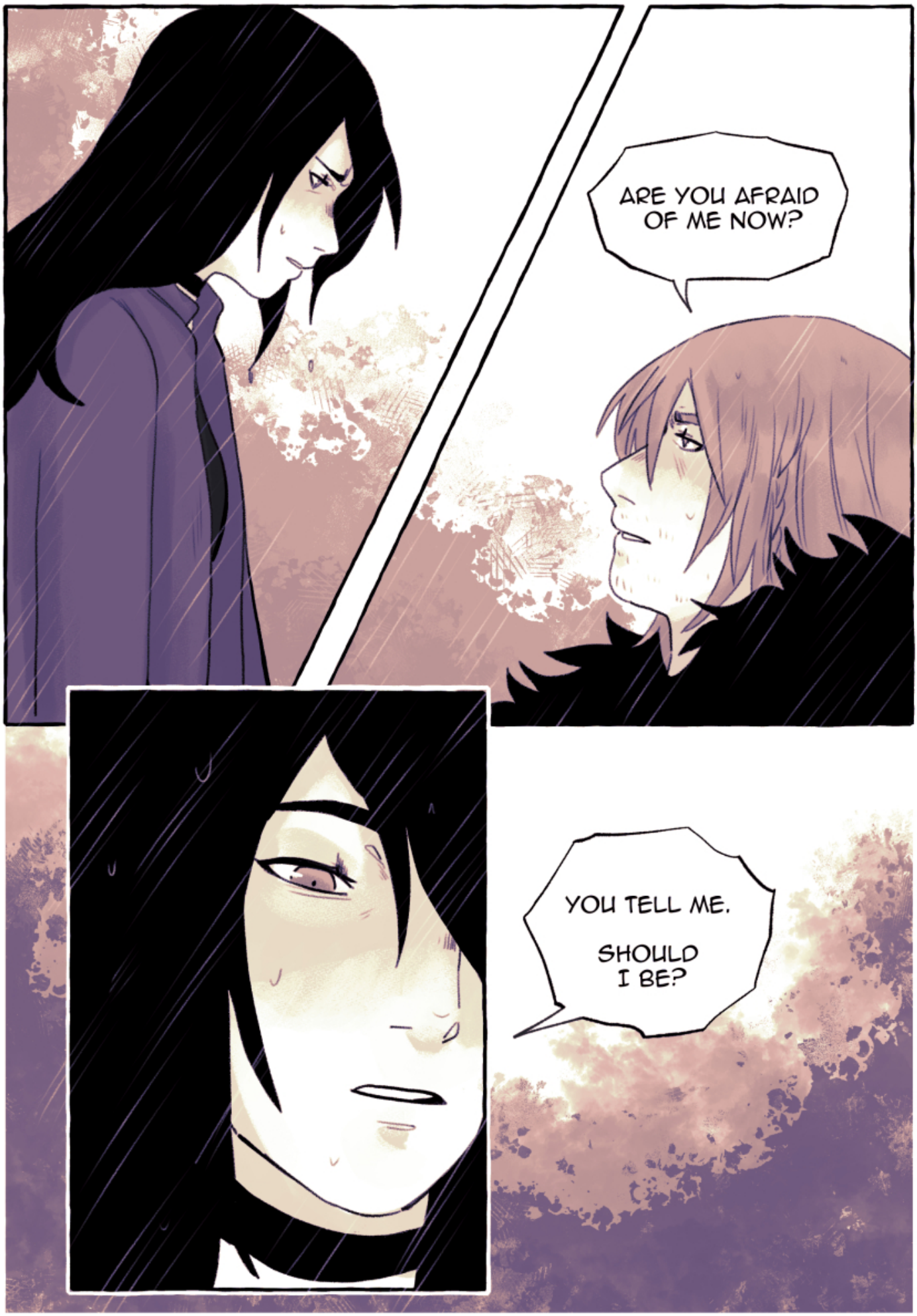

IF I WERE YOU, I'D BE CAREFUL.
I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU BELIEVE THIS GUY IS YOUR FRIEND...
BUT I DON'T THINK THAT HE'S WHAT HE CLAIMS TO BE, AVA.
PLITSHH


WHAT HE CLAIMS TO BE...?





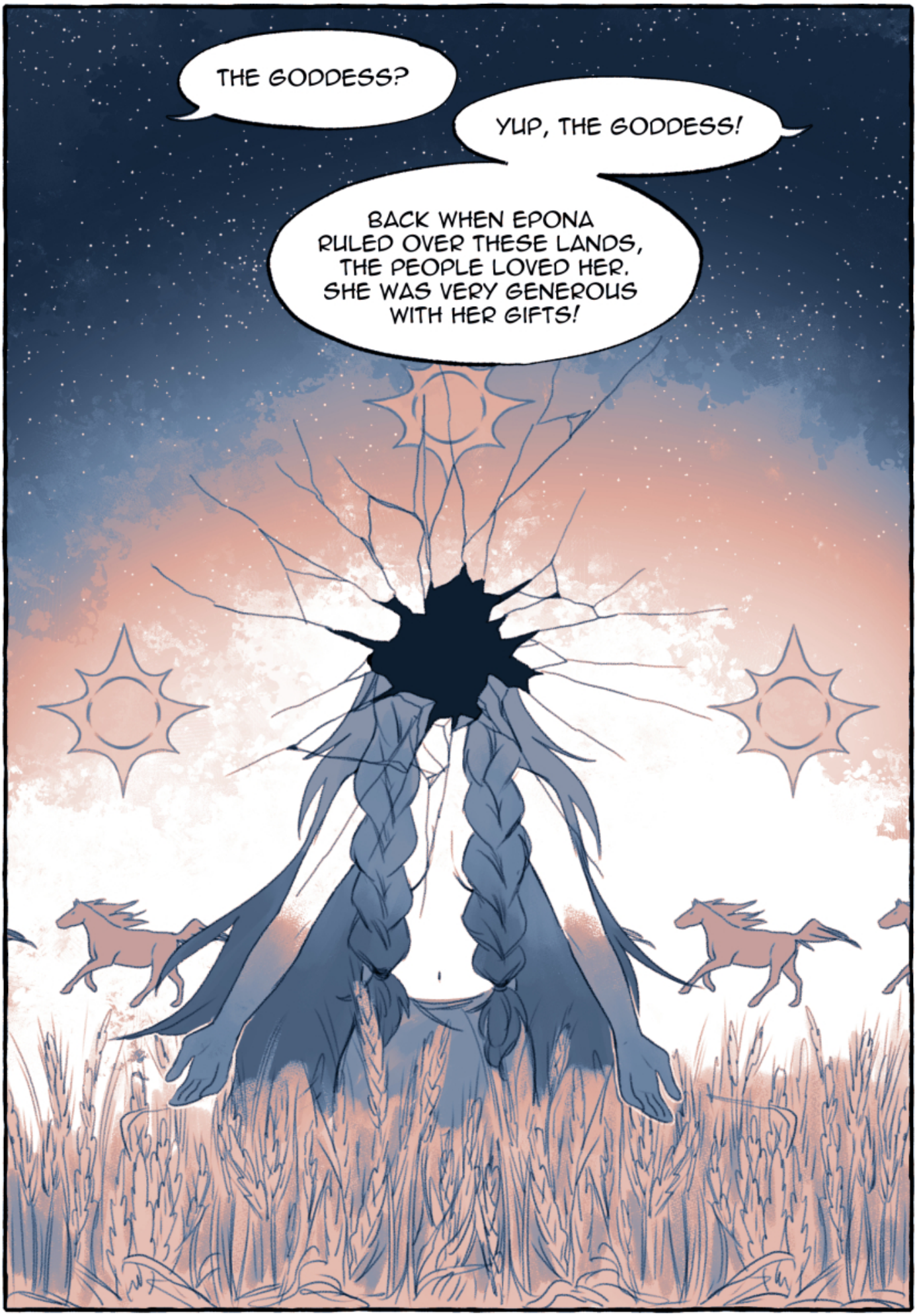

BERSERKIR...
DON'T WORRY, HE'LL BE FINE.
HE IS A DEITY. HIS WOUNDS WILL HEAL QUICKLY.

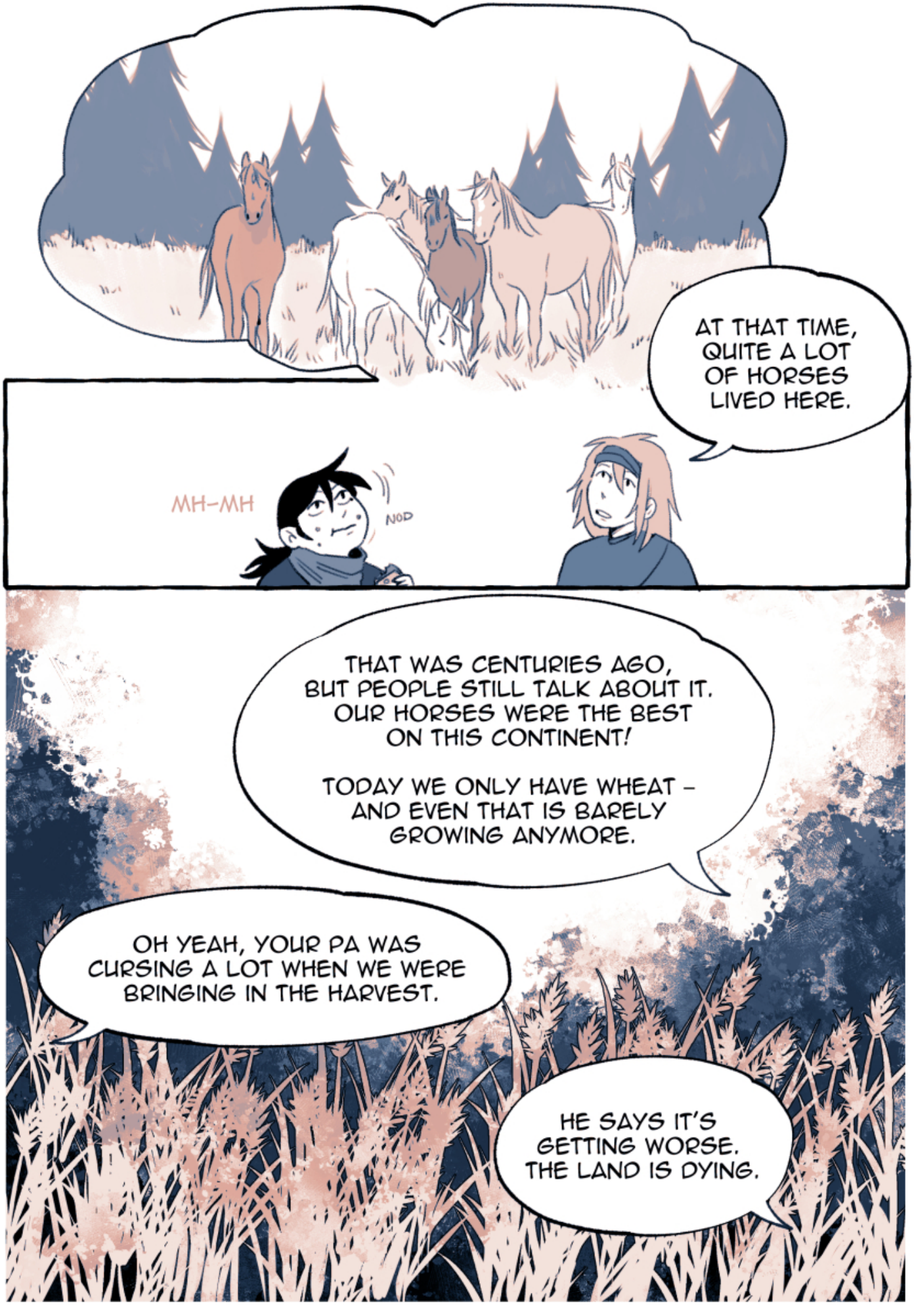

ARE YOU AFRAID OF ME NOW?
YOU TELL ME.
SHOULD I BE?

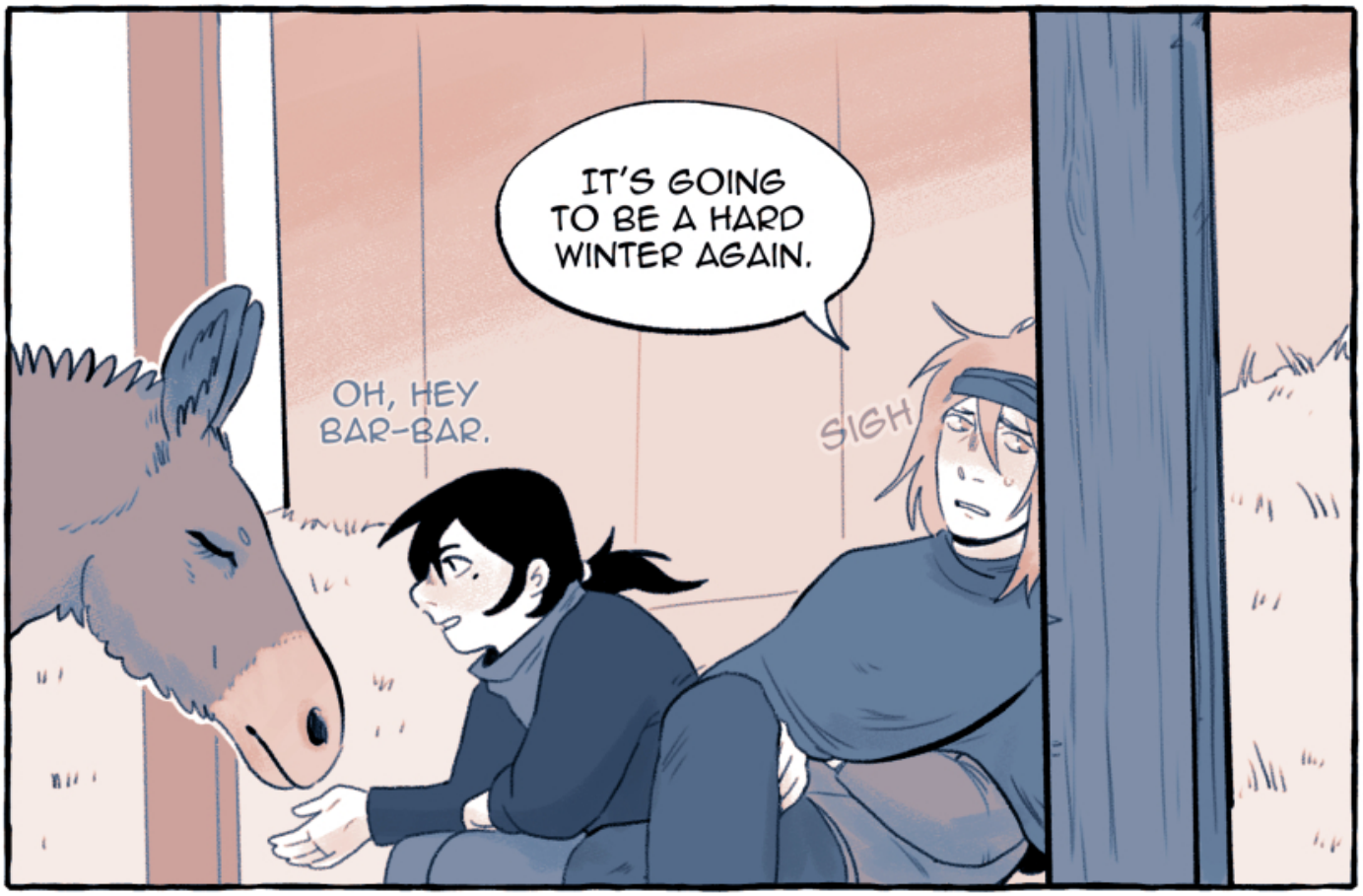
MEANWHILE, IN THE VILLAGE...

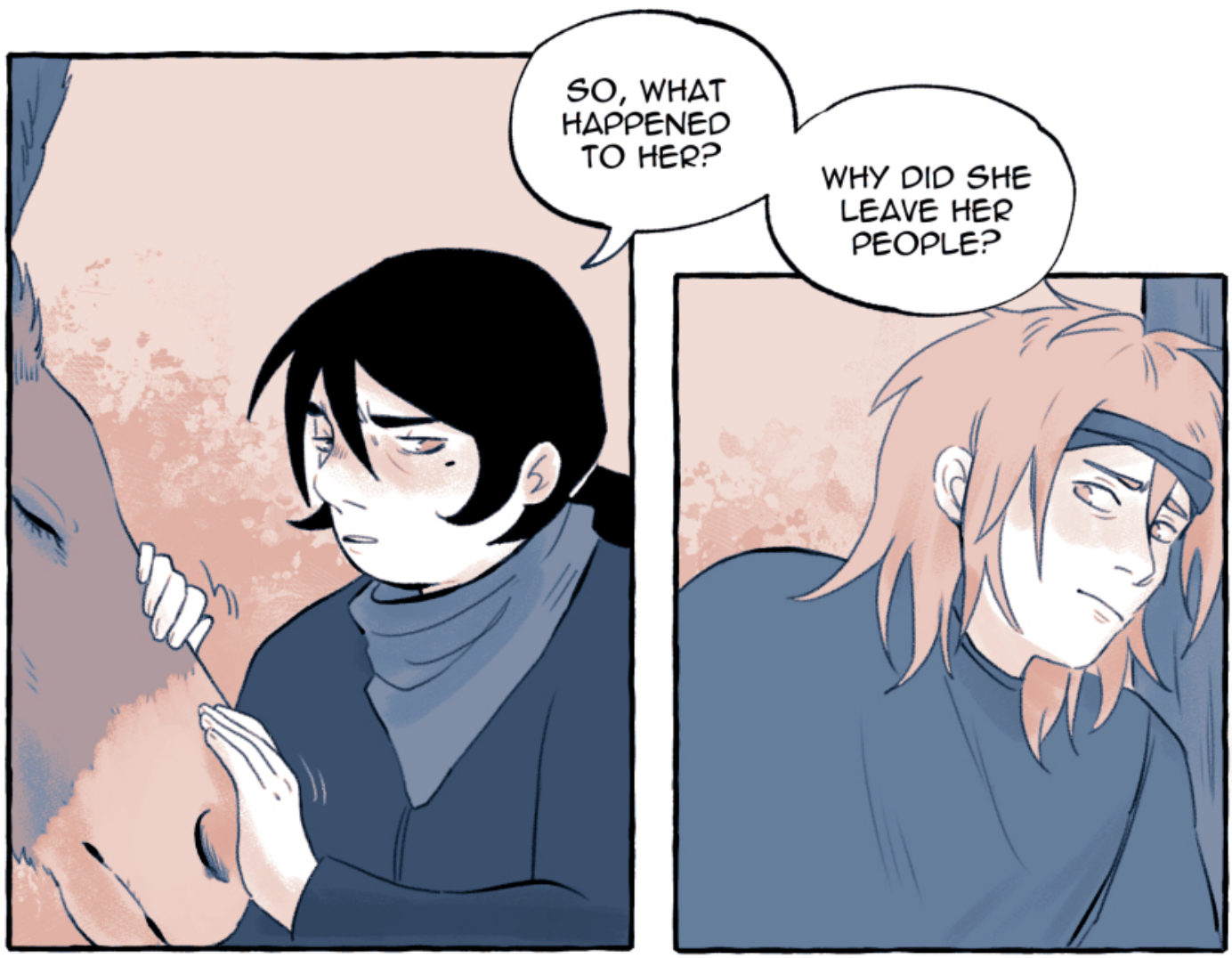
HEY, LUKAS... WHAT DID YOUR PA MEAN EARLIER?
WHEN HE SAID WE SHOULD BE CAREFUL AT THE EDGE OF THE FOREST?
WELL-
PA DOESN'T TRUST THE BLACK BEAST ONE BIT.
JUST LIKE MY GRANDPA.
HE FORBID US TO GO NEAR THE FOREST AND STUFF LIKE THAT.

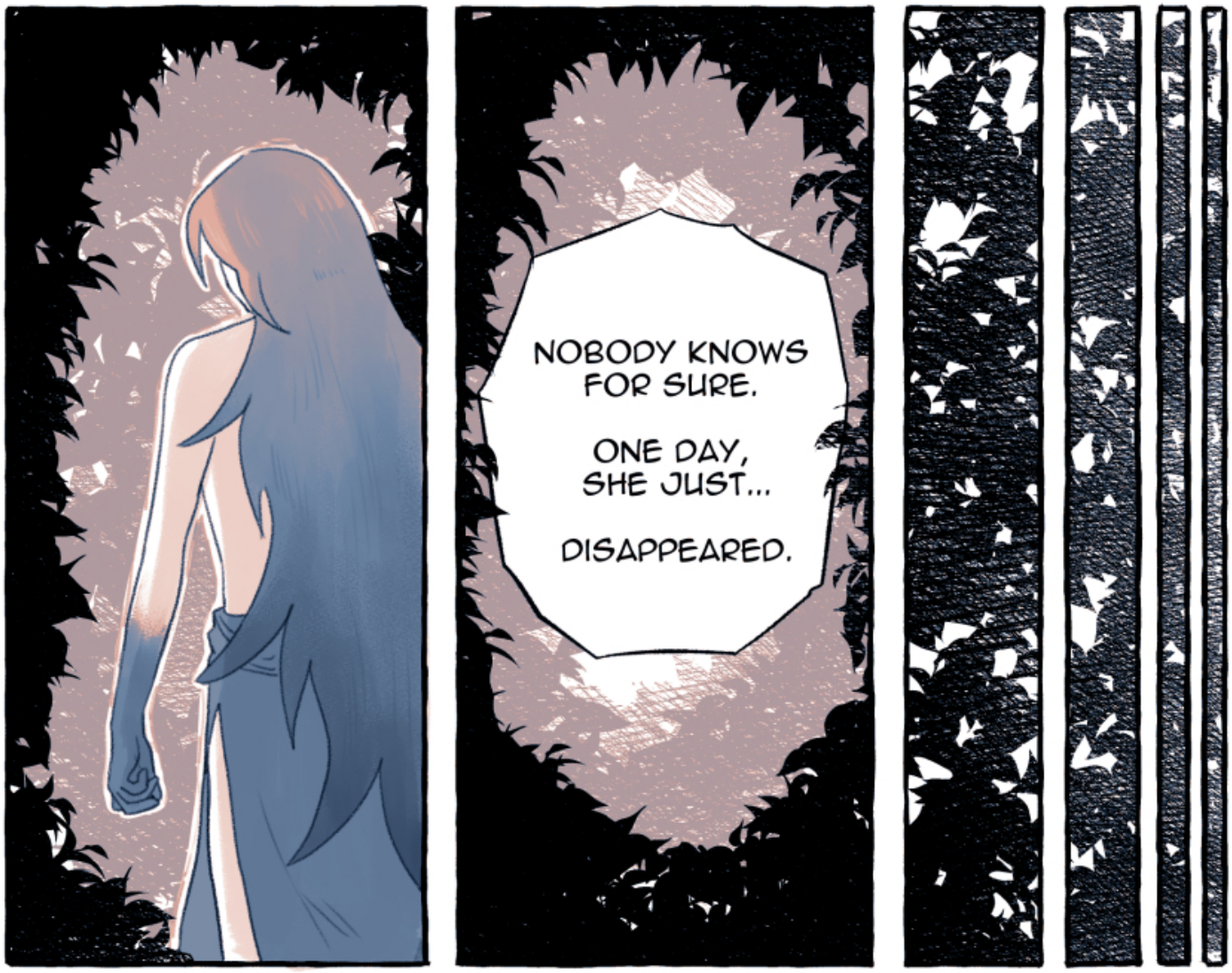
BUT...
DOESN'T THIS VILLAGE WORSHIP BERSERKIR?
YES... AND NO.
WE *DO* MAKE OFFERINGS EVERY YEAR, BUT THAT'S A TRADITION THAT GOES BACK TO THE DAYS WHEN THE GODDESS STILL LIVED HERE.
AND SO THAT HE WON'T KILL US ALL ONE DAY.
BRIBERY, YOU KNOW?

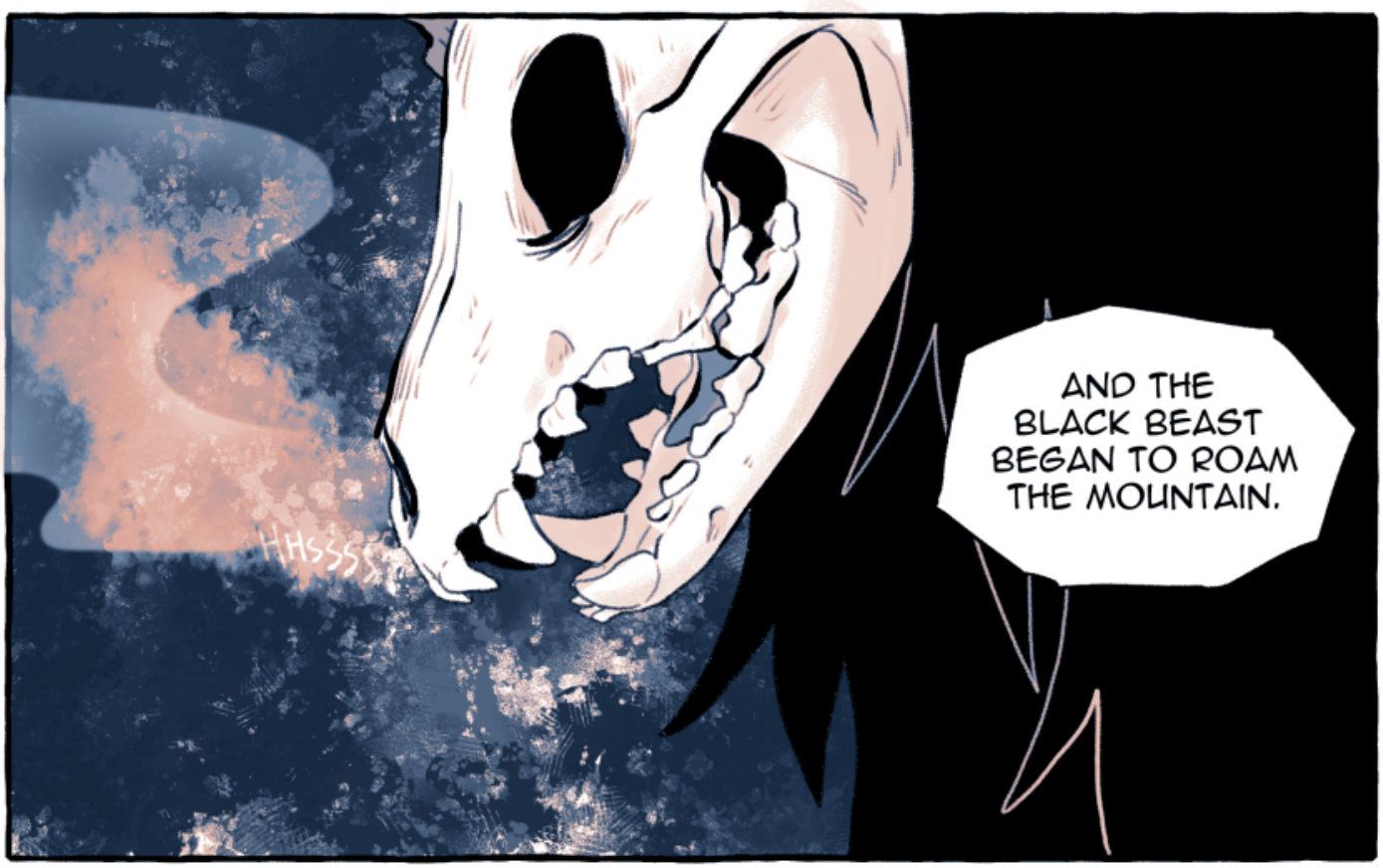

THE GODDESS?
YUP, THE GODDESS!
BACK WHEN EPONA RULED OVER THESE LANDS, THE PEOPLE LOVED HER. SHE WAS VERY GENEROUS WITH HER GIFTS!

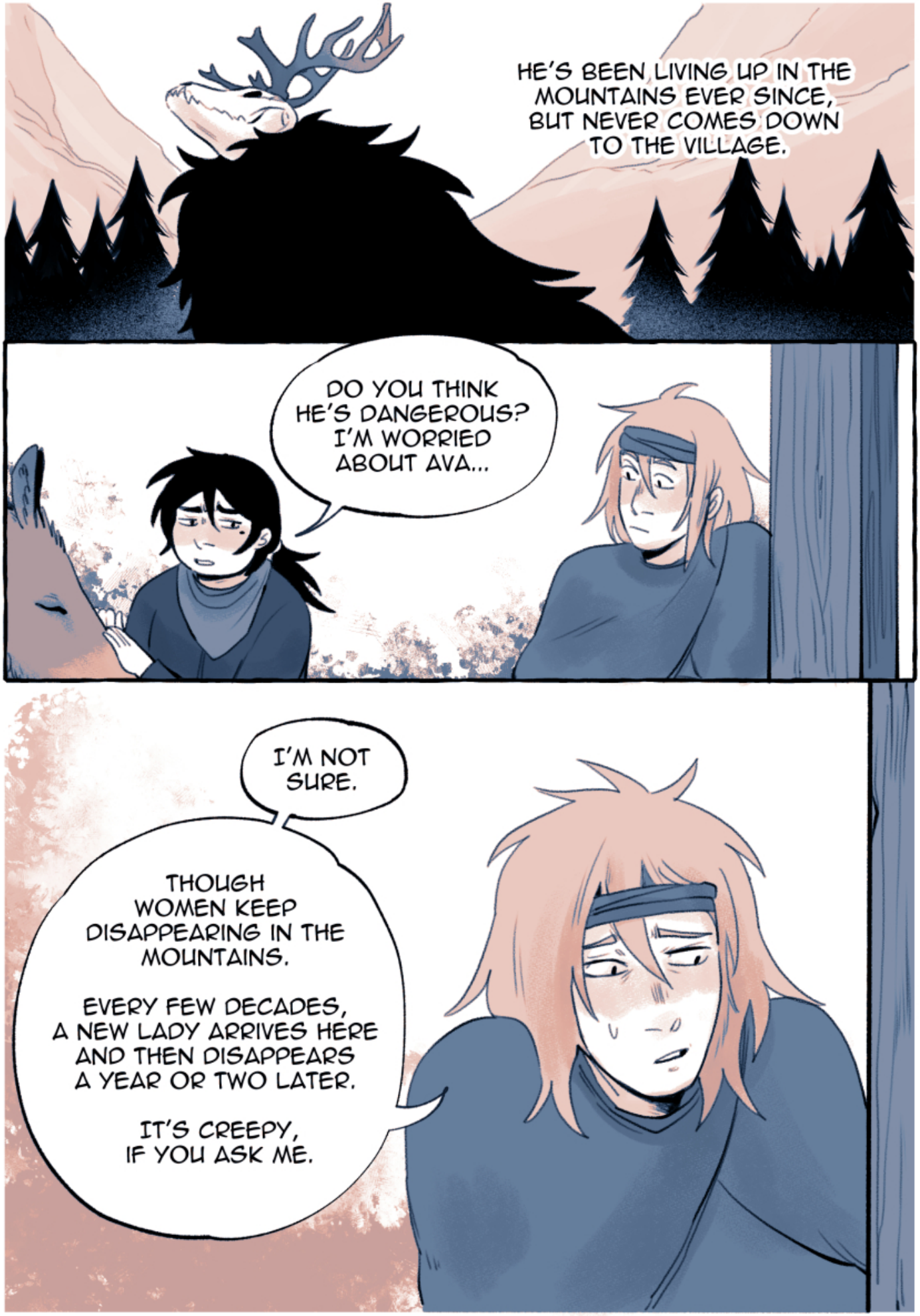

AT THAT TIME, QUITE A LOT OF HORSES LIVED HERE.
MH-MH
NOD
THAT WAS CENTURIES AGO, BUT PEOPLE STILL TALK ABOUT IT. OUR HORSES WERE THE BEST ON THIS CONTINENT!
TODAY WE ONLY HAVE WHEAT – AND EVEN THAT IS BARELY GROWING ANYMORE.
OH YEAH, YOUR PA WAS CURSING A LOT WHEN WE WERE BRINGING IN THE HARVEST.
HE SAYS IT'S GETTING WORSE. THE LAND IS DYING.

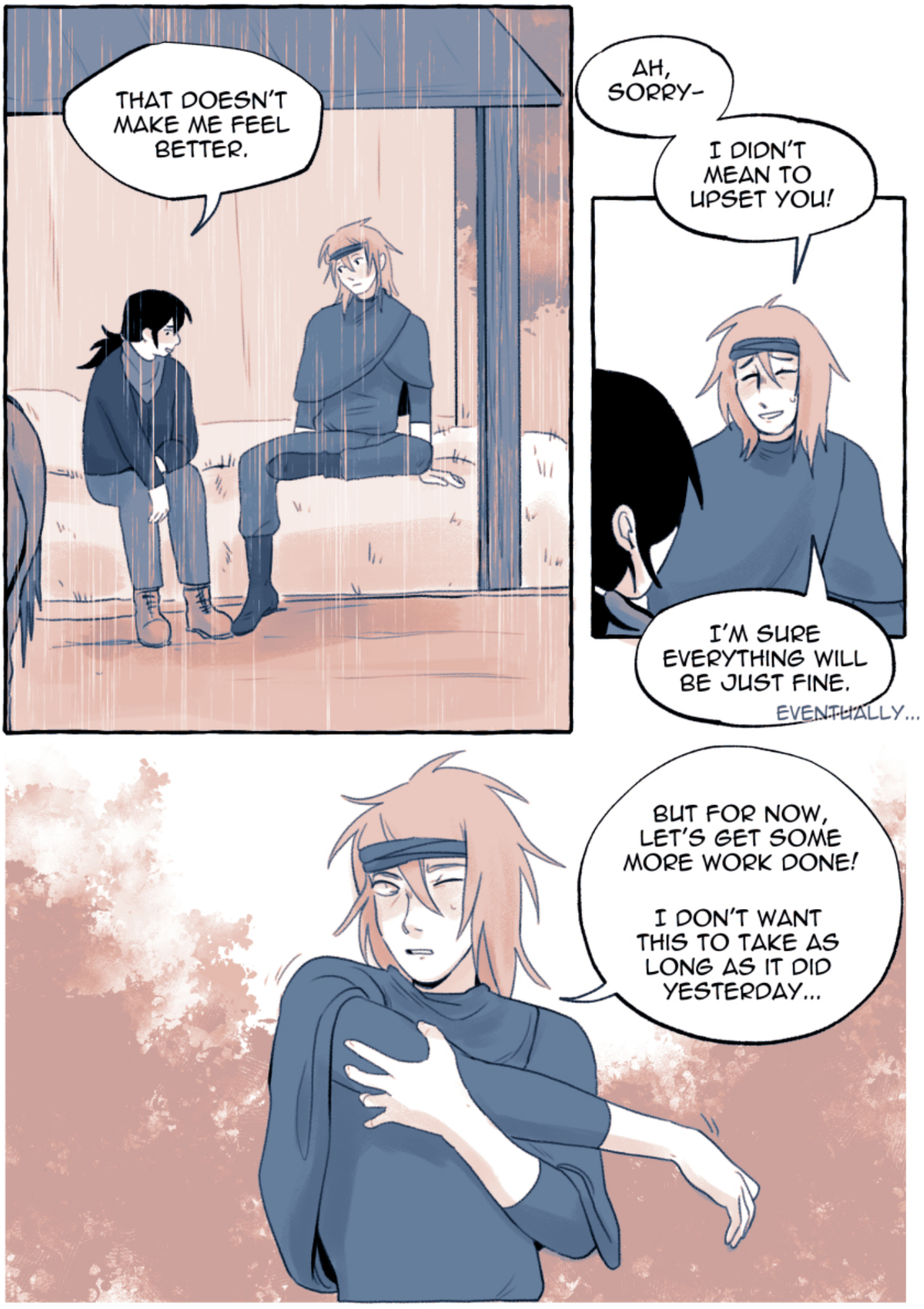

IT'S GOING TO BE A HARD WINTER AGAIN.
OH, HEY BAR-BAR.
SIGH

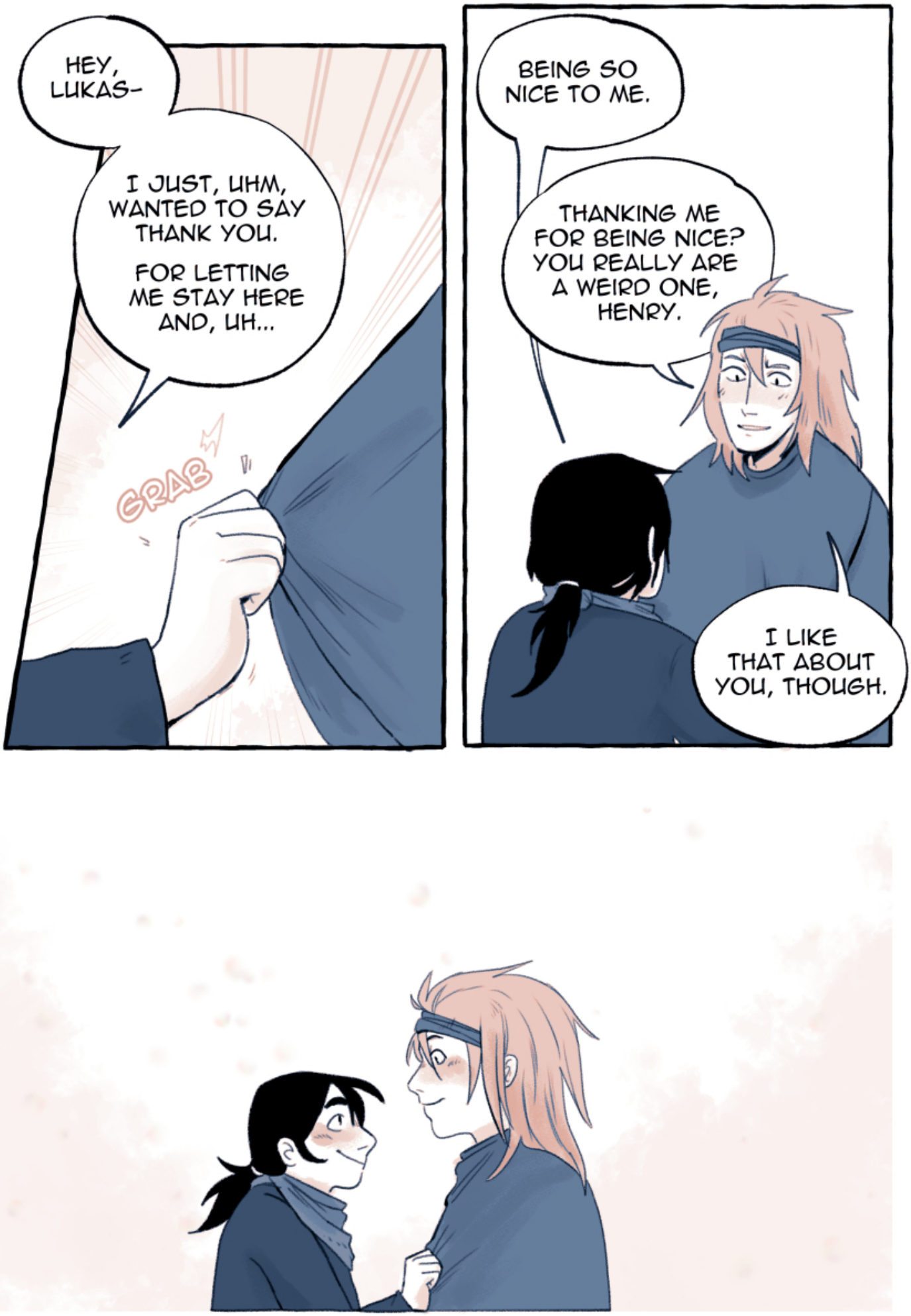

SO, WHAT HAPPENED TO HER?
WHY DID SHE LEAVE HER PEOPLE?

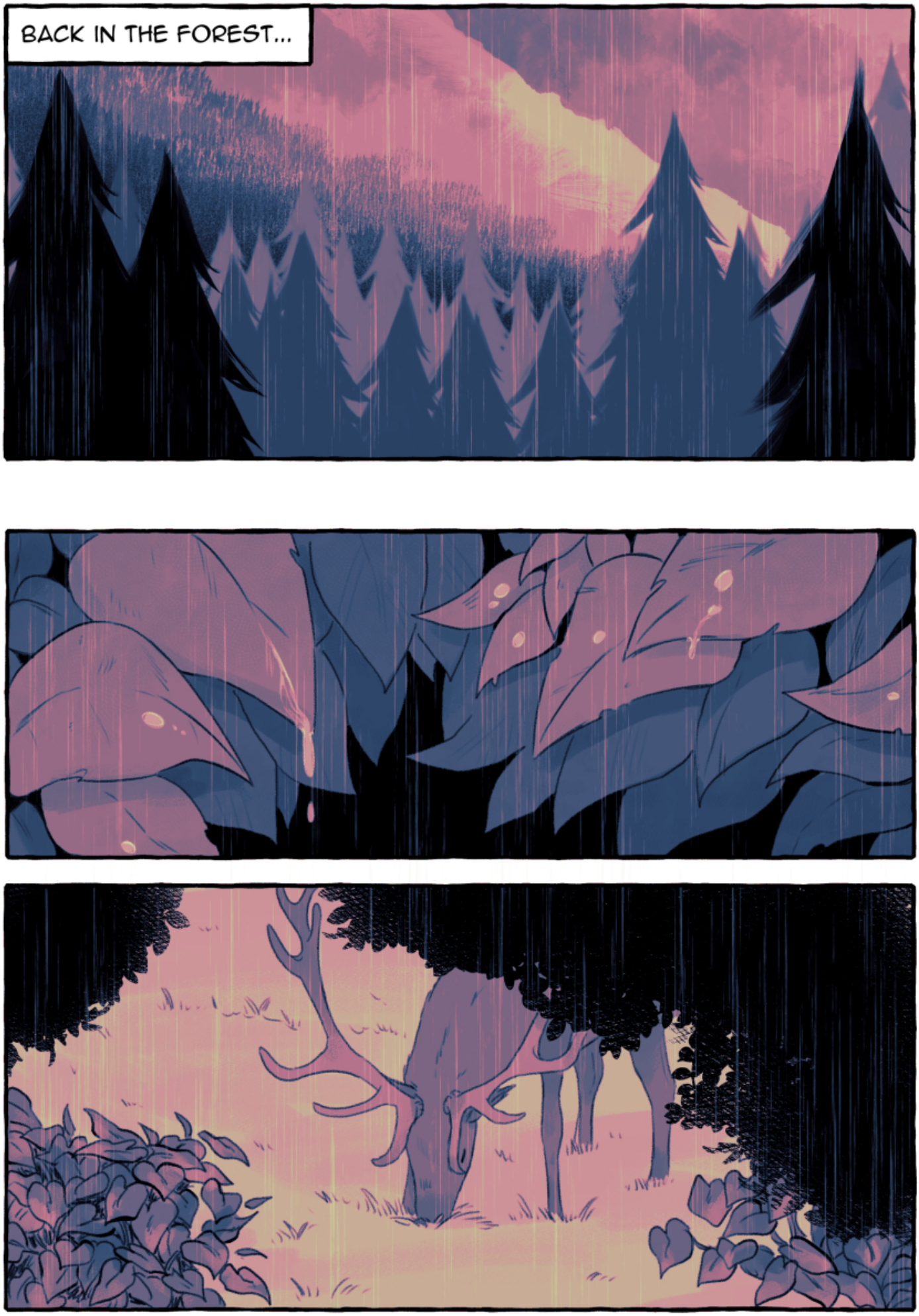

NOBODY KNOWS FOR SURE.
ONE DAY, SHE JUST...
DISAPPEARED.

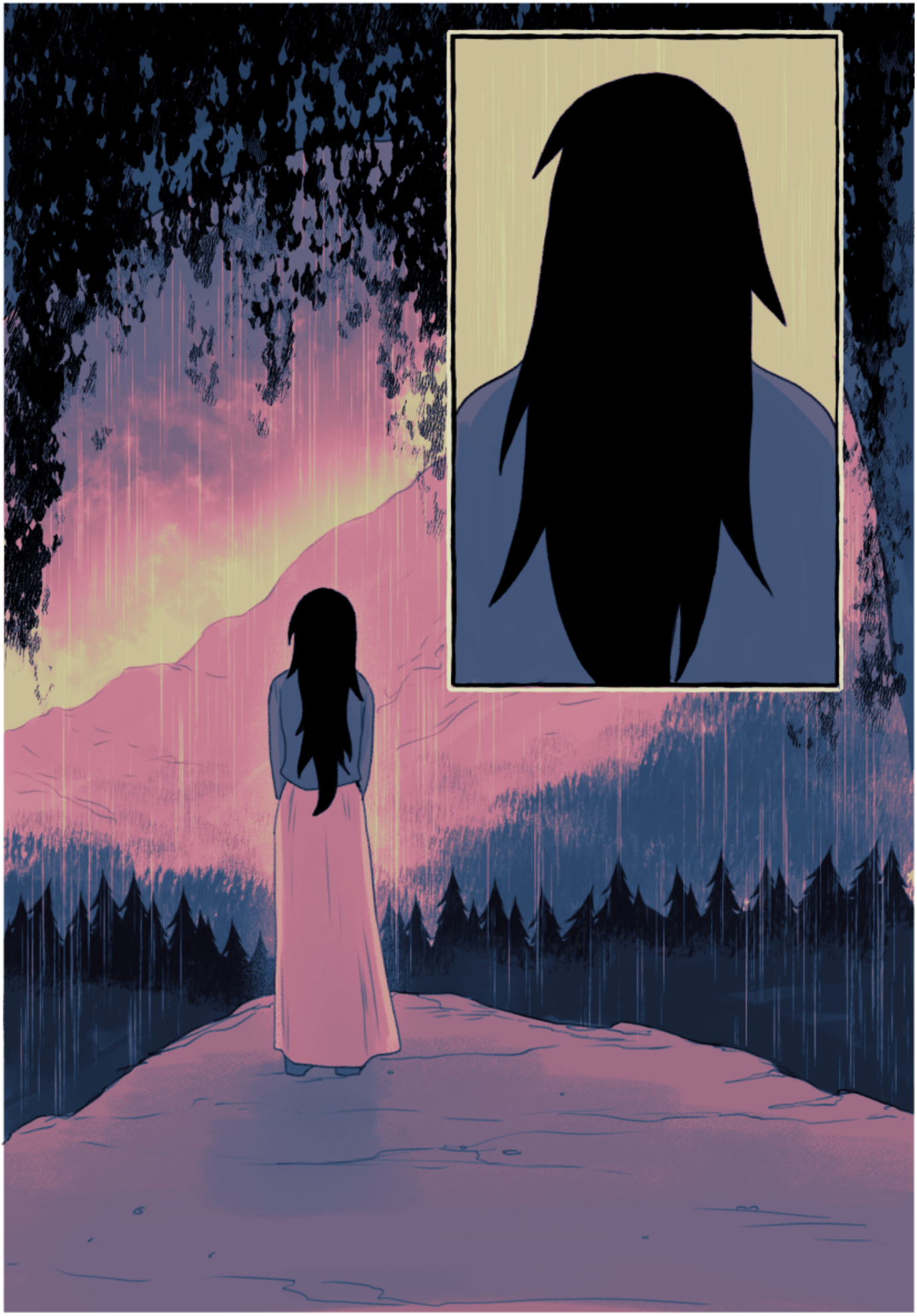

HHSSSS
AND THE BLACK BEAST BEGAN TO ROAM THE MOUNTAIN.

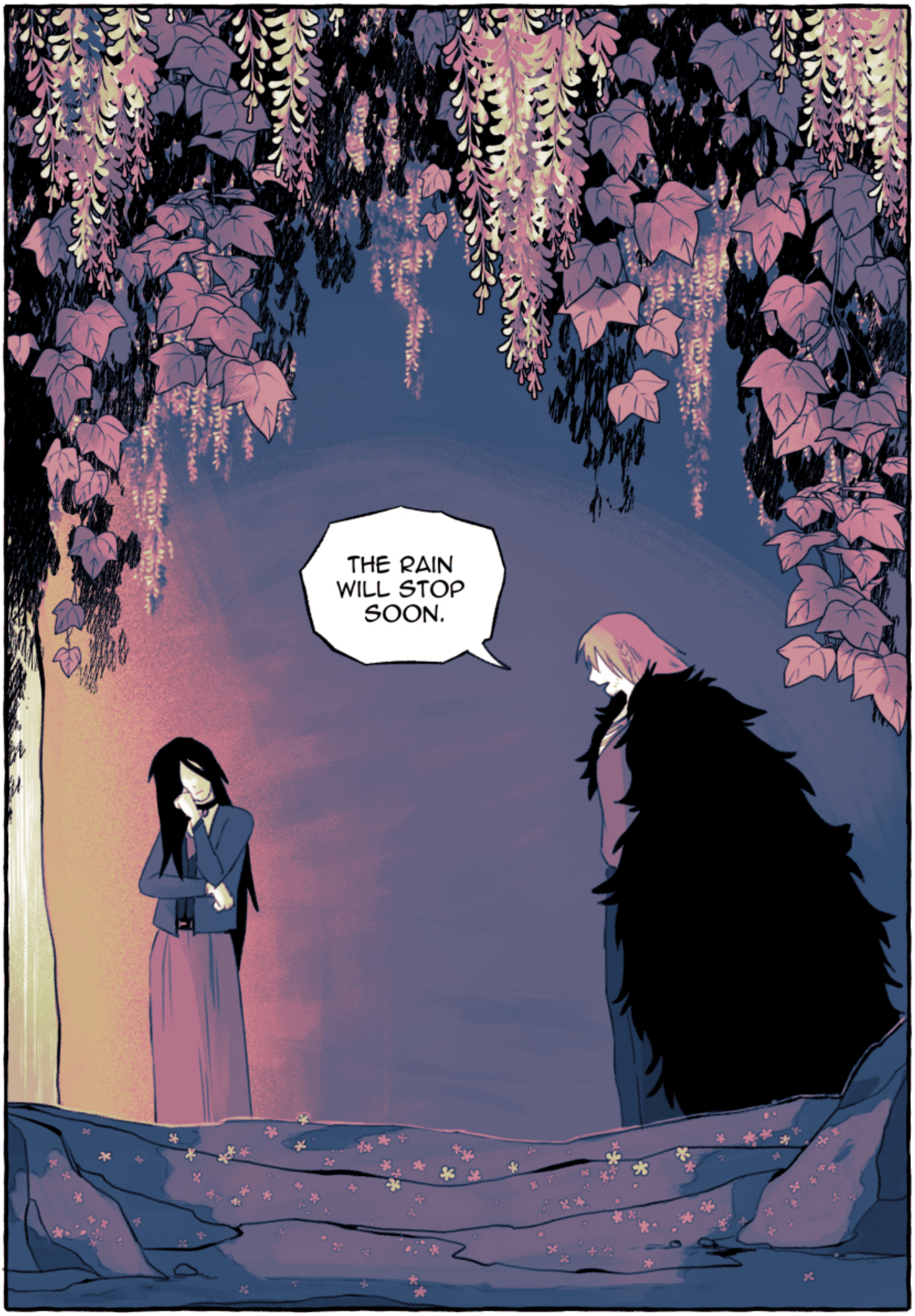

HE'S BEEN LIVING UP IN THE MOUNTAINS EVER SINCE, BUT NEVER COMES DOWN TO THE VILLAGE.
DO YOU THINK HE'S DANGEROUS? I'M WORRIED ABOUT AVA...
I'M NOT SURE.
THOUGH WOMEN KEEP DISAPPEARING IN THE MOUNTAINS.
EVERY FEW DECADES, A NEW LADY ARRIVES HERE AND THEN DISAPPEARS A YEAR OR TWO LATER.
IT'S CREEPY, IF YOU ASK ME.


THAT DOESN'T MAKE ME FEEL BETTER.
AH, SORRY-
I DIDN'T MEAN TO UPSET YOU!
I'M SURE EVERYTHING WILL BE JUST FINE.
EVENTUALLY...
BUT FOR NOW, LET'S GET SOME MORE WORK DONE!
I DON'T WANT THIS TO TAKE AS LONG AS IT DID YESTERDAY...

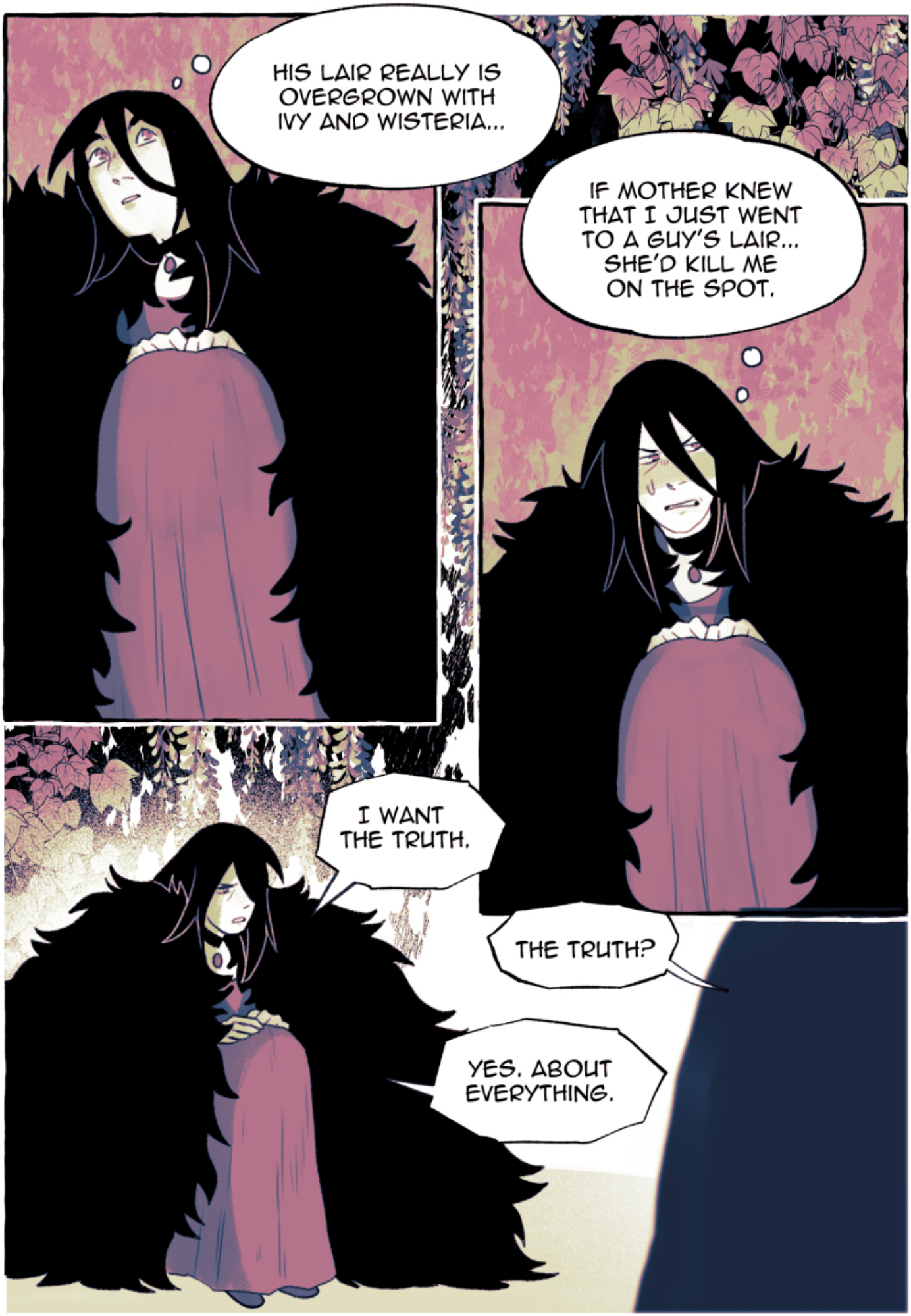

HEY, LUKAS-
I JUST, UHM, WANTED TO SAY THANK YOU.
FOR LETTING ME STAY HERE AND, UH...
GRAB
BEING SO NICE TO ME.
THANKING ME FOR BEING NICE? YOU REALLY ARE A WEIRD ONE, HENRY.
I LIKE THAT ABOUT YOU, THOUGH.


BACK IN THE FOREST...

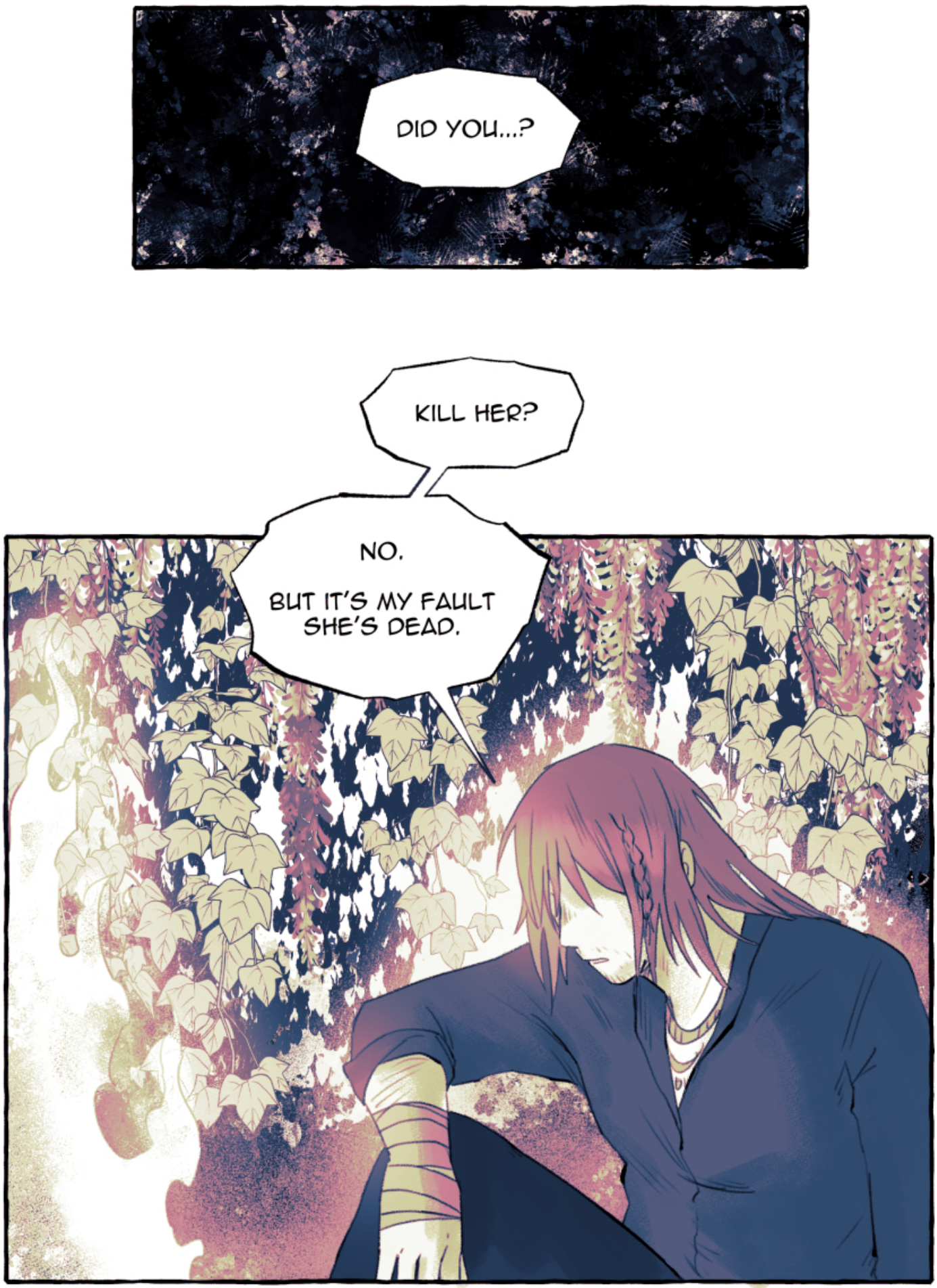


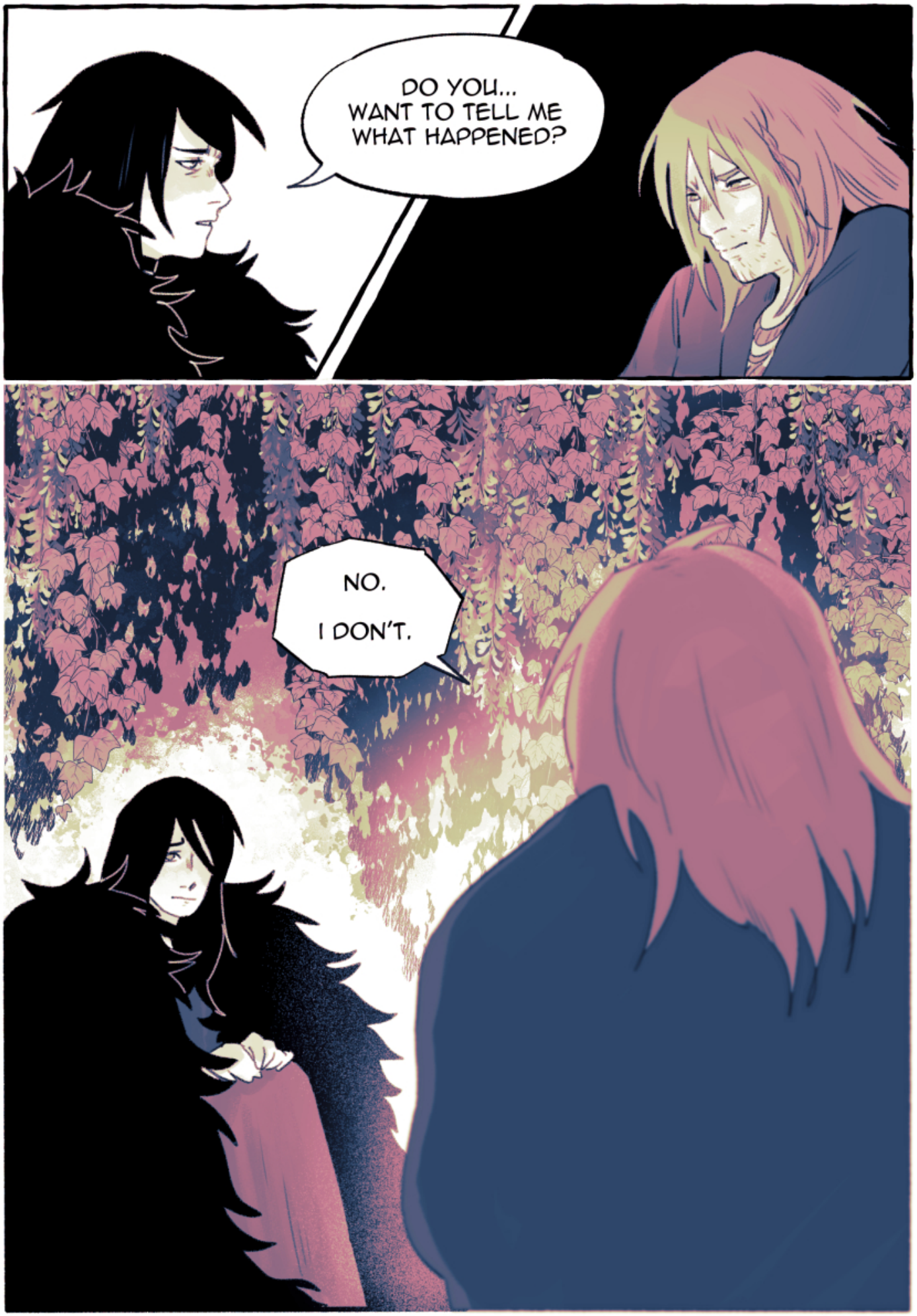

THE RAIN WILL STOP SOON.

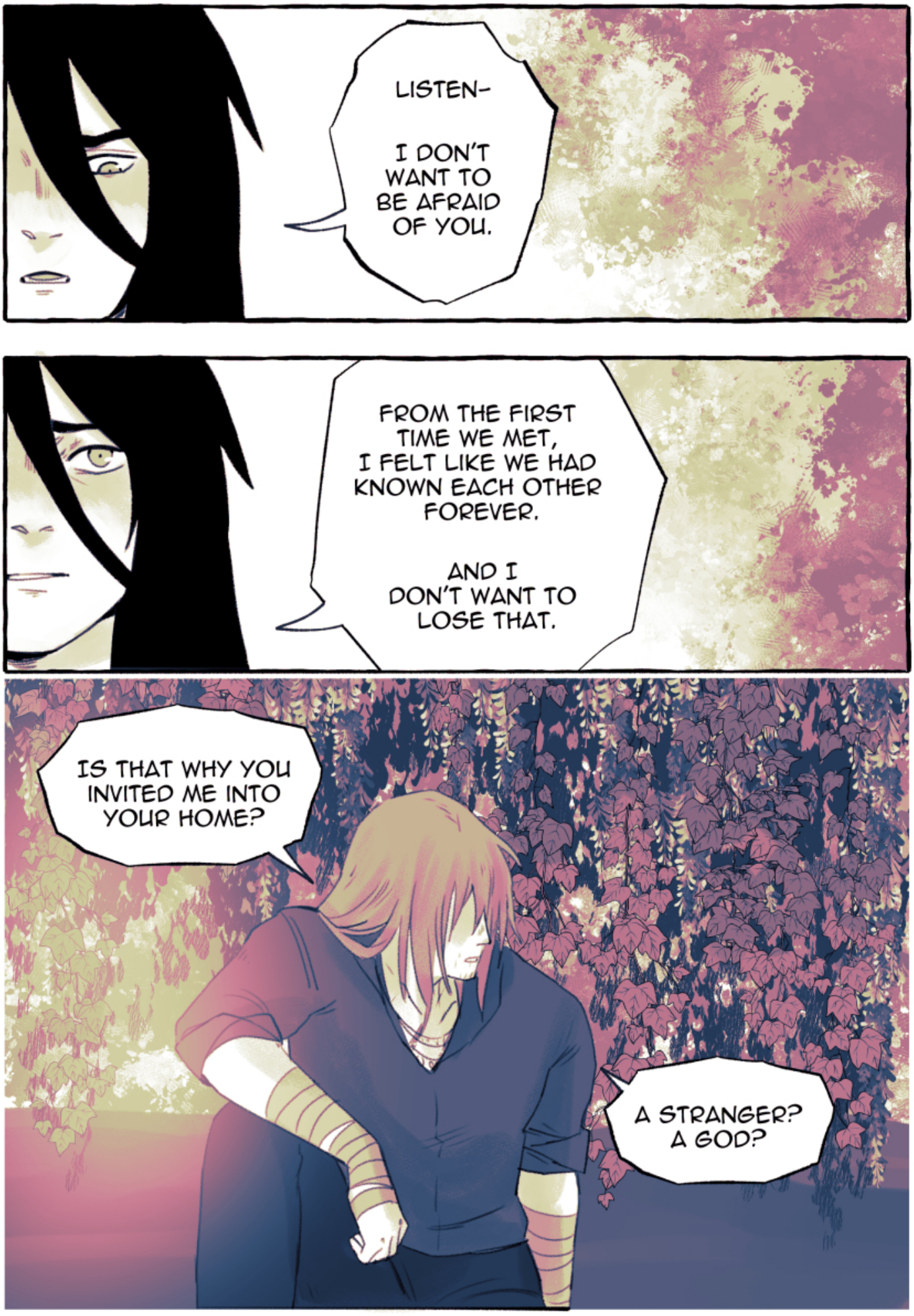
COME ON,
LET'S WARM UP
BY THE FIRE.

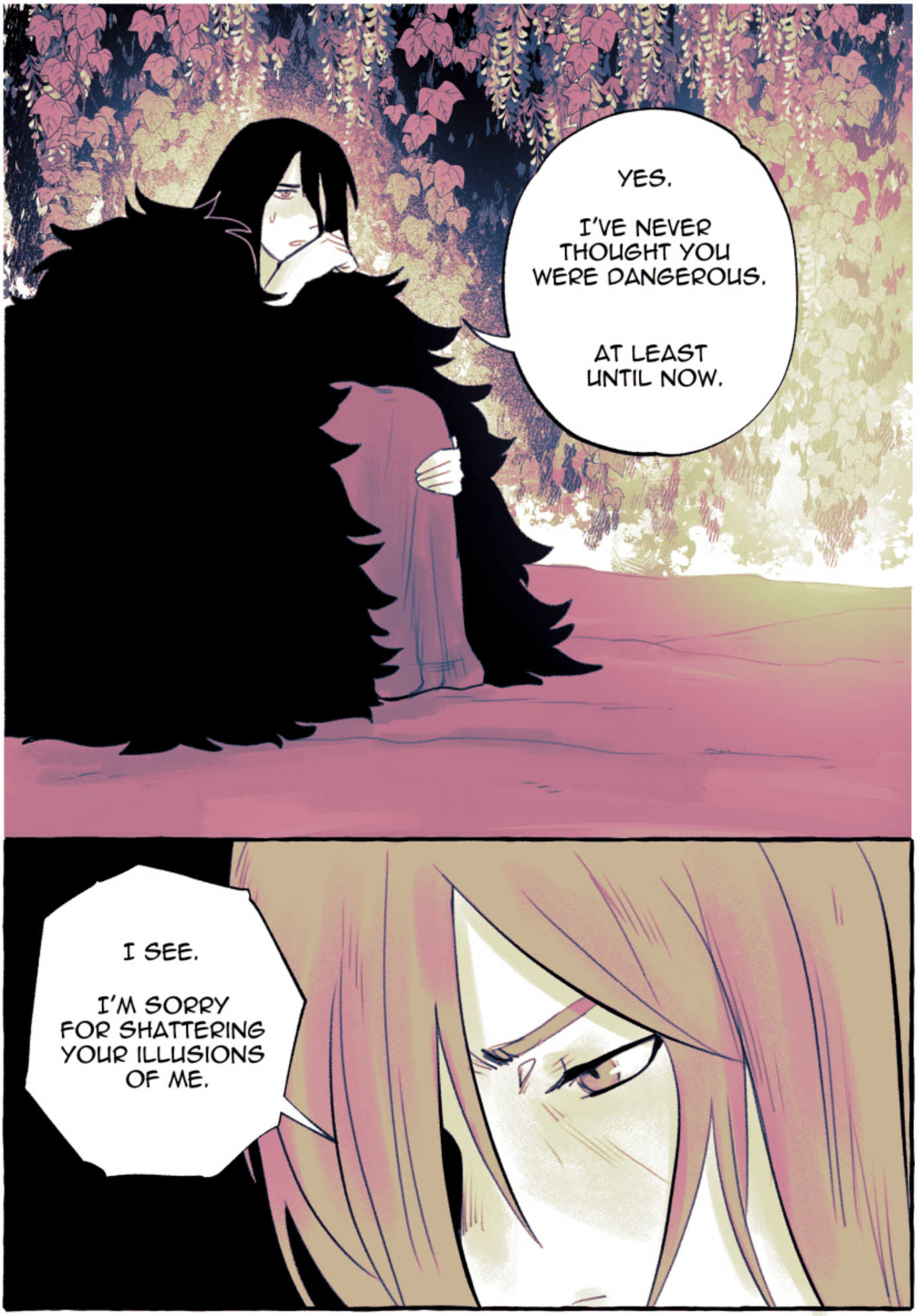

HIS LAIR REALLY IS OVERGROWN WITH IVY AND WISTERIA...
IF MOTHER KNEW THAT I JUST WENT TO A GUY'S LAIR... SHE'D KILL ME ON THE SPOT.
I WANT THE TRUTH.
THE TRUTH?
YES. ABOUT EVERYTHING.

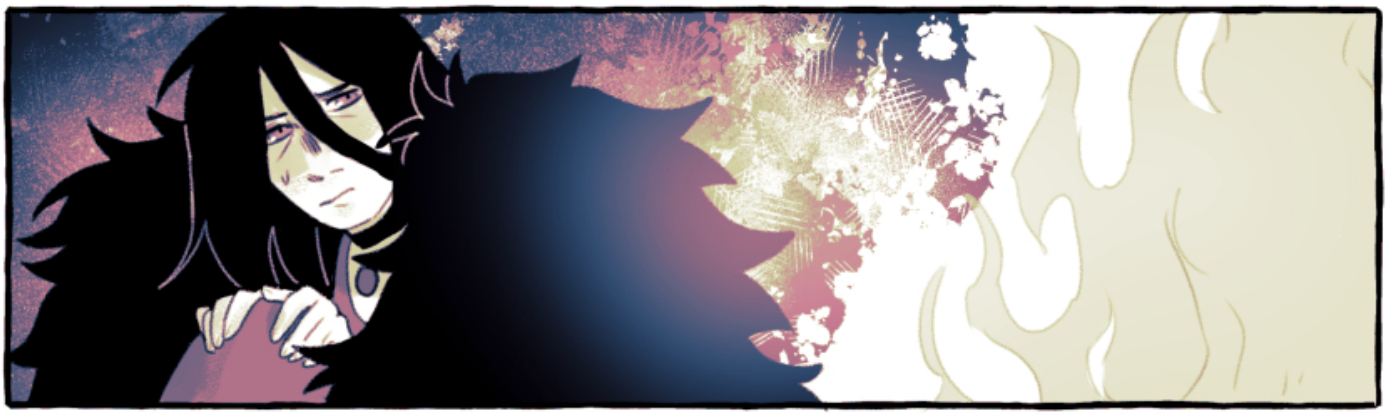
TRUST ME AVA, YOU DON'T WANT TO KNOW.
I MEAN IT.
BUT YOU KNOW THIS GODDESS? EPONA?
... YES.
IS SHE DEAD?
... YES. SHE'S DEAD.

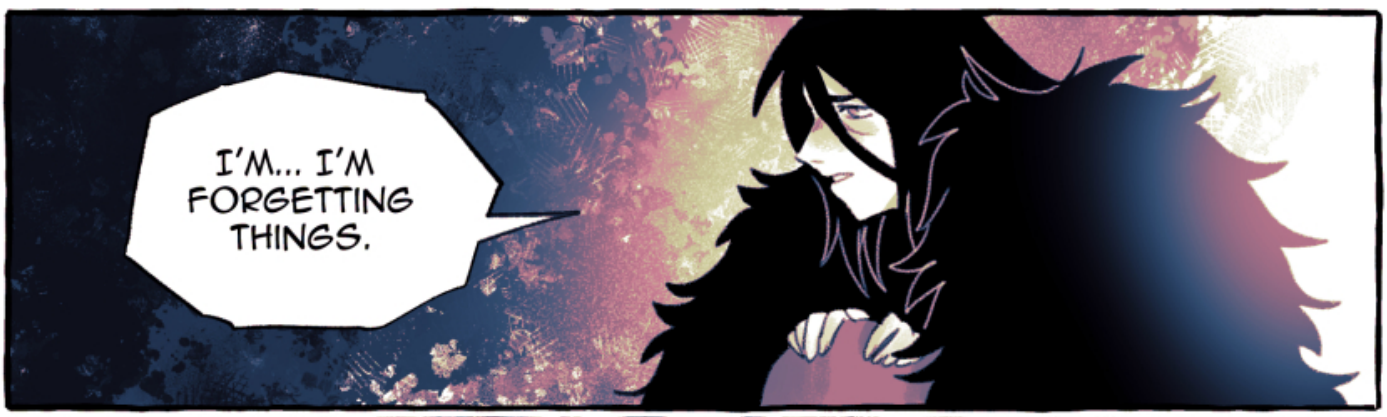

DID YOU...?
KILL HER?
NO.
BUT IT'S MY FAULT SHE'S DEAD.


DO YOU... WANT TO TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED?
NO.
I DON'T.


LISTEN-
I DON'T WANT TO BE AFRAID OF YOU.
FROM THE FIRST TIME WE MET, I FELT LIKE WE HAD KNOWN EACH OTHER FOREVER.
AND I DON'T WANT TO LOSE THAT.
IS THAT WHY YOU INVITED ME INTO YOUR HOME?
A STRANGER? A GOD?

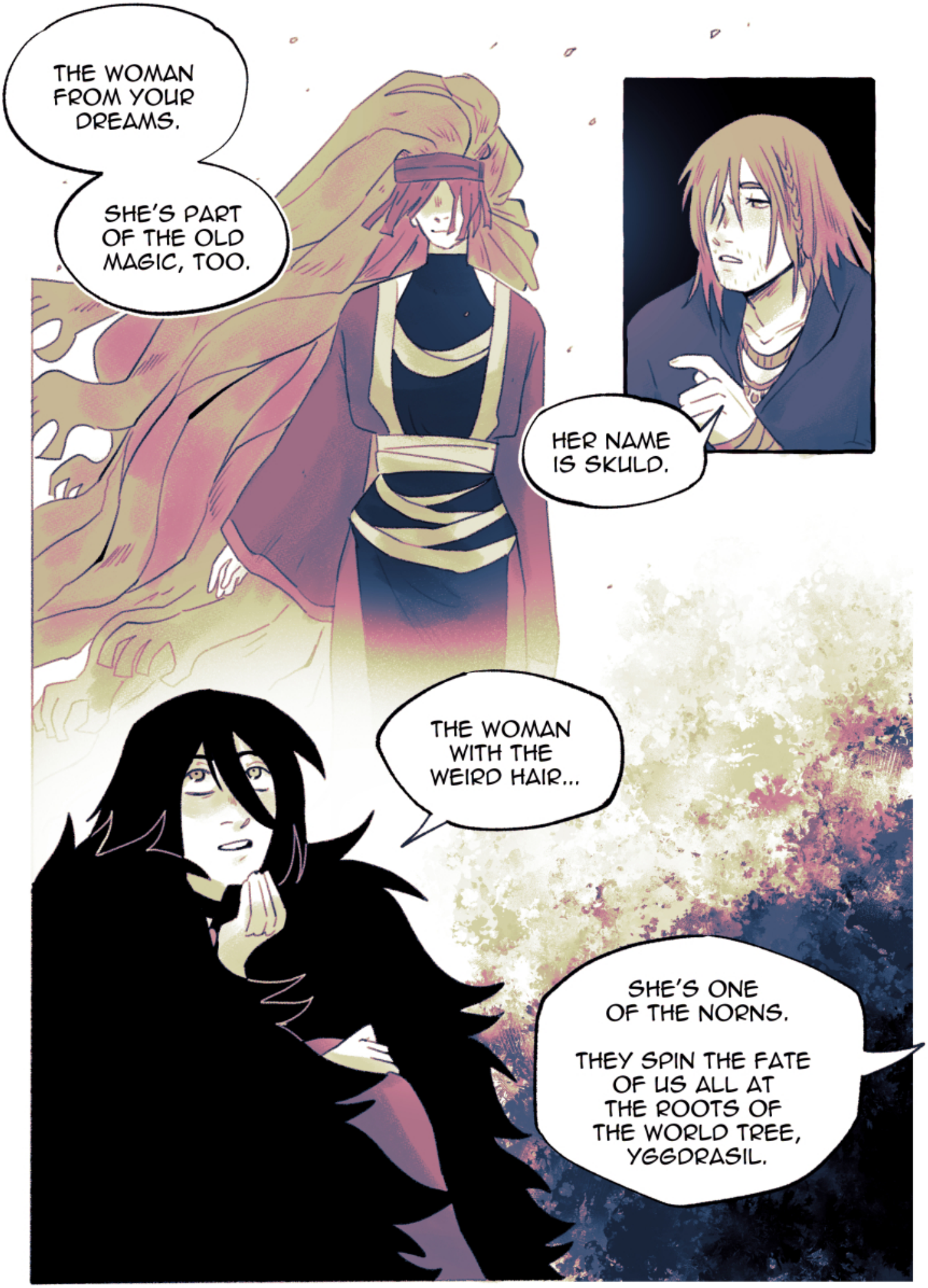

YES.
I'VE NEVER THOUGHT YOU WERE DANGEROUS.
AT LEAST UNTIL NOW.
I SEE.
I'M SORRY FOR SHATTERING YOUR ILLUSIONS OF ME.

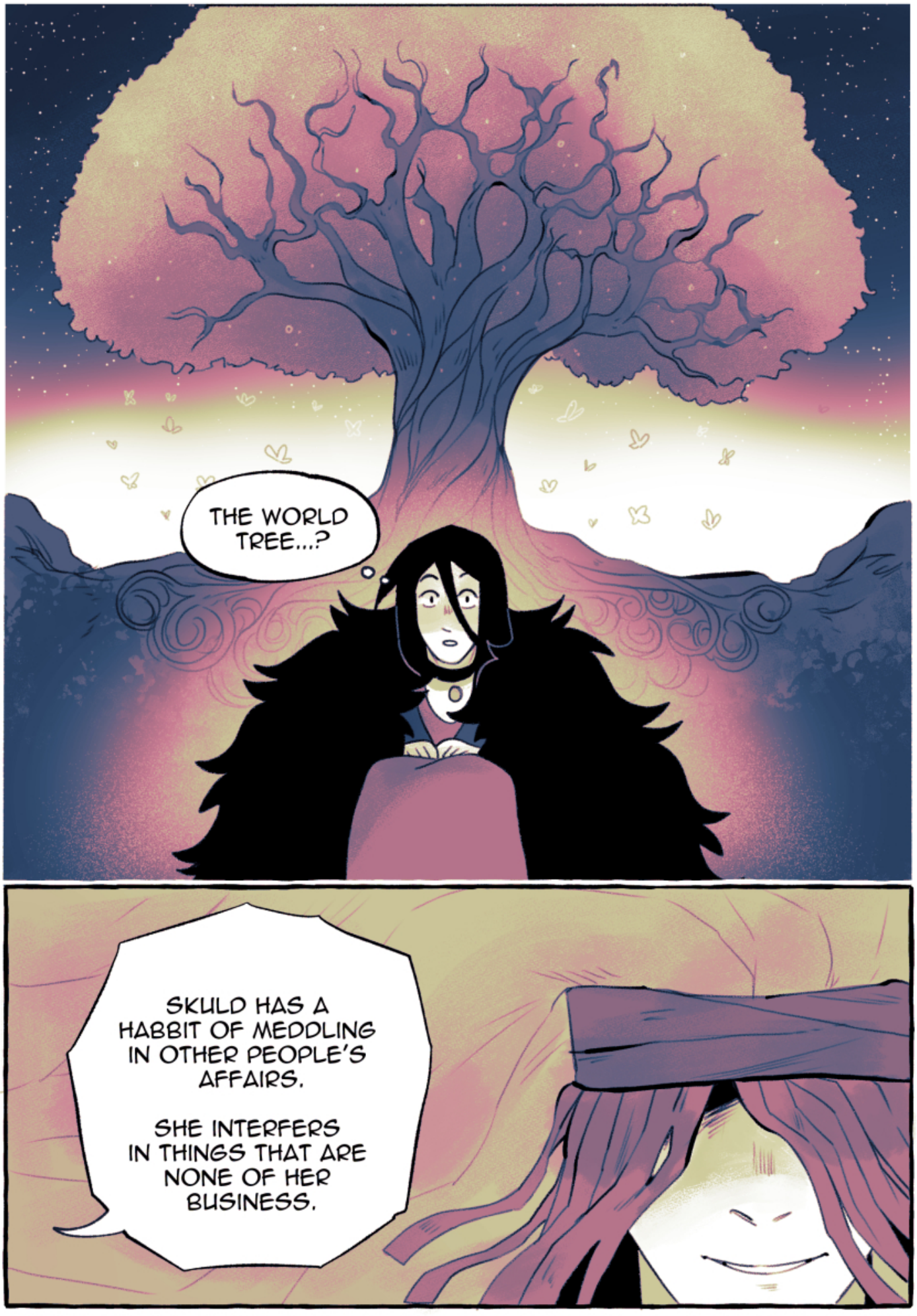



I'M... I'M FORGETTING THINGS.

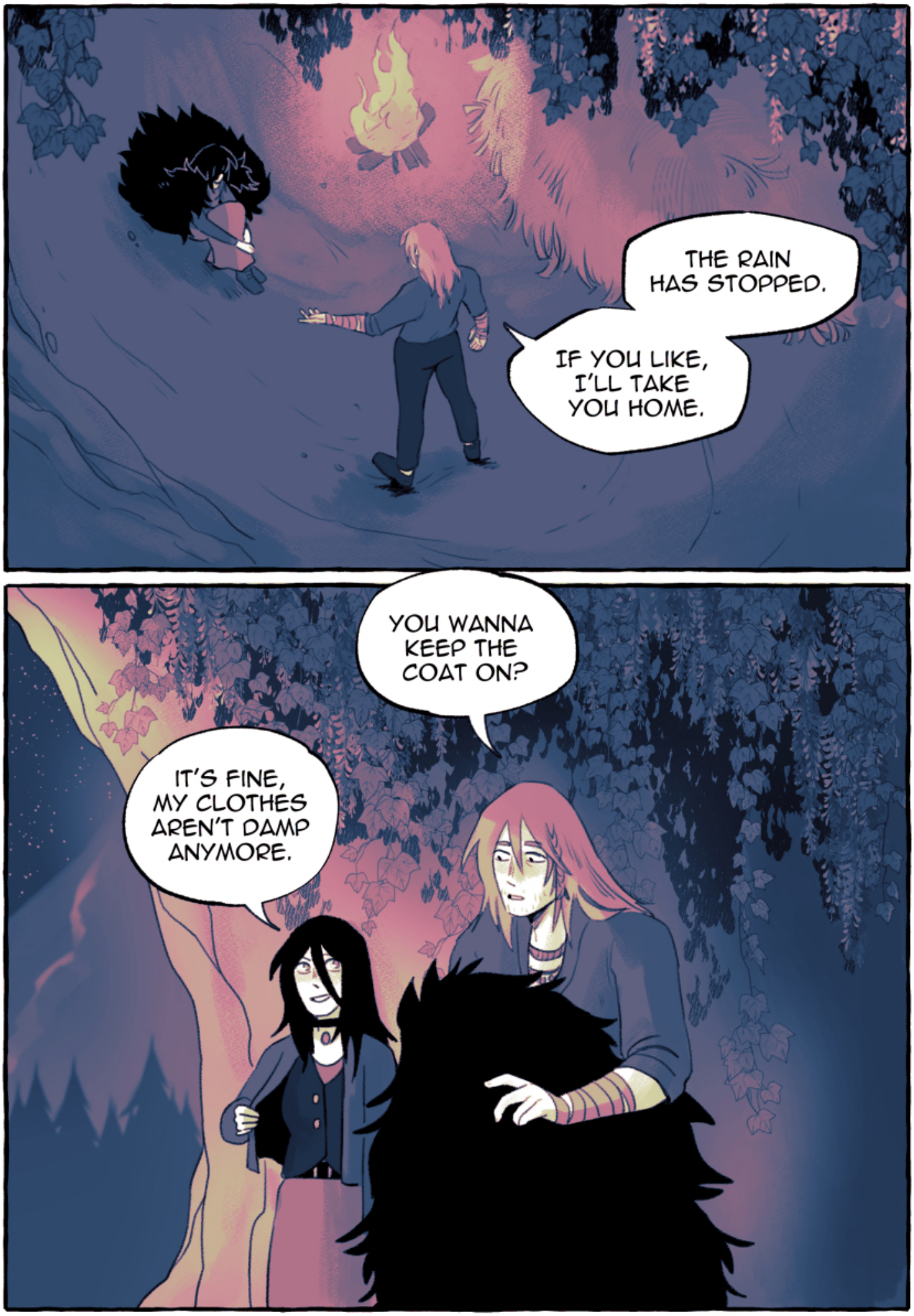
WHY AM I FORGETTING EVERYTHING?
I CAN HARDLY REMEMBER MY LIFE BEFORE I CAME HERE. IT'S ALL KIND OF... BLURRY.

ALL I KNOW IS THAT IT WAS AWFUL, UNBEARABLE.
AND THAT IT FELT COMPLETELY WRONG.
AN EMPTY AND HOLLOW LIFE...
WELL, AVA... THERE'S VERY OLD MAGIC IN THESE LANDS, AS OLD AS LIFE ITSELF.
SOME PEOPLE FORGET THINGS WHEN THEY'RE HERE IN THE MOUNTAINS.
AND SOME ARE CURSED TO REMEMEBER EVERY SINGLE SECOND.


THE WOMAN FROM YOUR DREAMS.
SHE'S PART OF THE OLD MAGIC, TOO.
HER NAME IS SKULD.
THE WOMAN WITH THE WEIRD HAIR...
SHE'S ONE OF THE NORNS.
THEY SPIN THE FATE OF US ALL AT THE ROOTS OF THE WORLD TREE, YGGDRASIL.


THE WORLD TREE...?
SKULD HAS A HABBIT OF MEDDLING IN OTHER PEOPLE'S AFFAIRS.
SHE INTERFERS IN THINGS THAT ARE NONE OF HER BUSINESS.

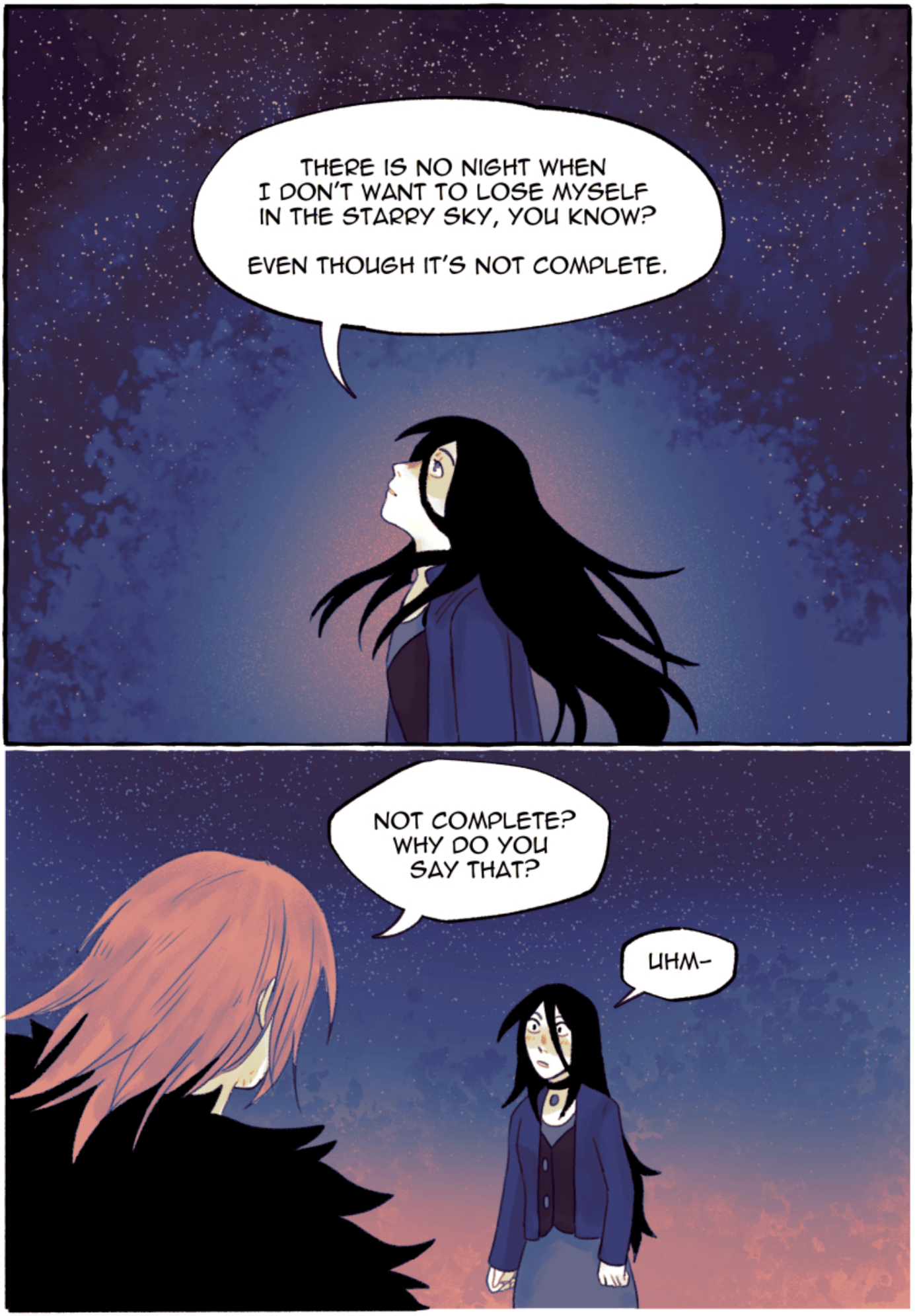
FATE IS A FICKLE GOD.
IT LEADS YOU TO HAPPINESS AND THEN TEARS YOU APART WITH INFINITE CRUELTY.

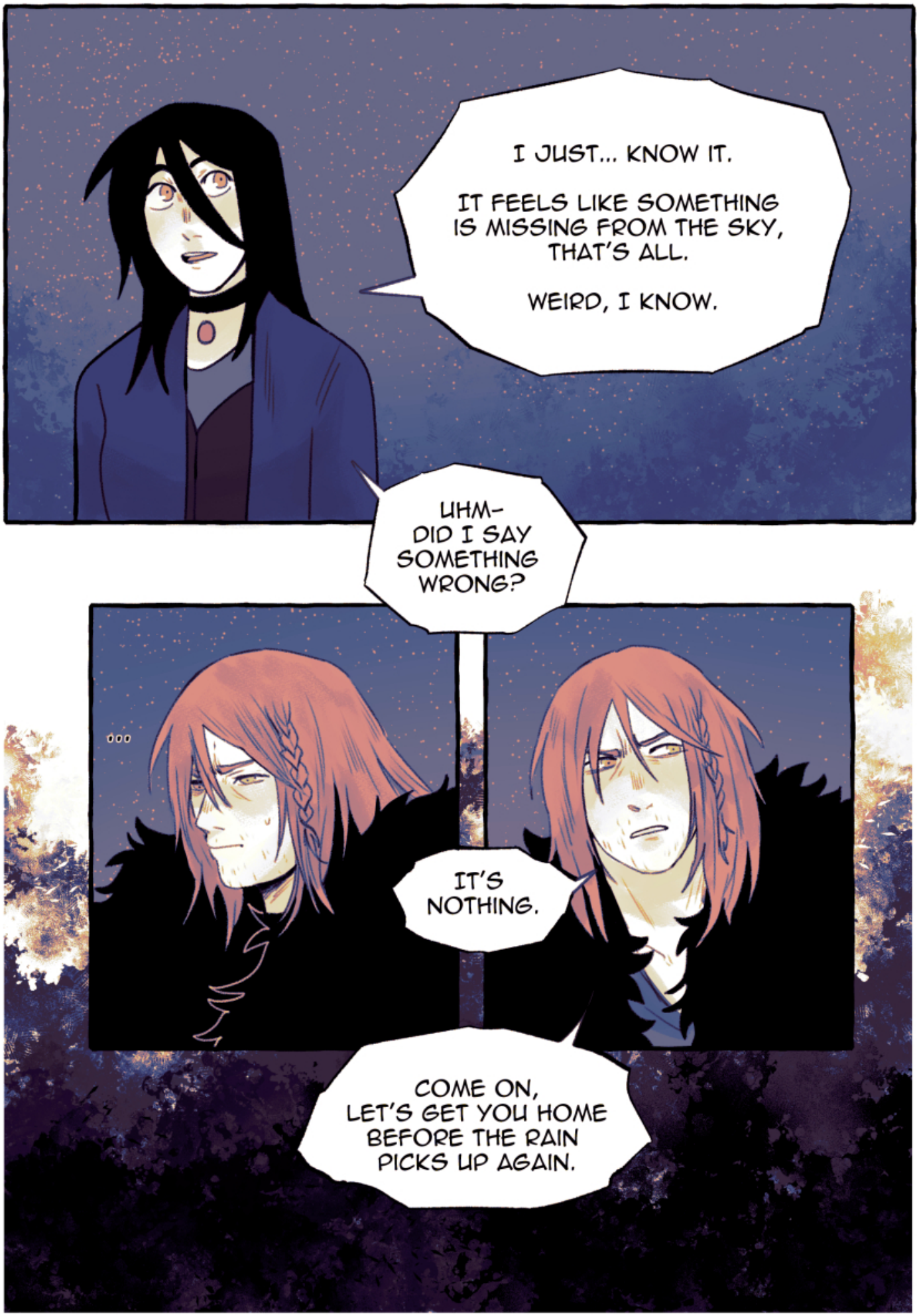

THE RAIN HAS STOPPED.
IF YOU LIKE, I'LL TAKE YOU HOME.
YOU WANNA KEEP THE COAT ON?
IT'S FINE, MY CLOTHES AREN'T DAMP ANYMORE.

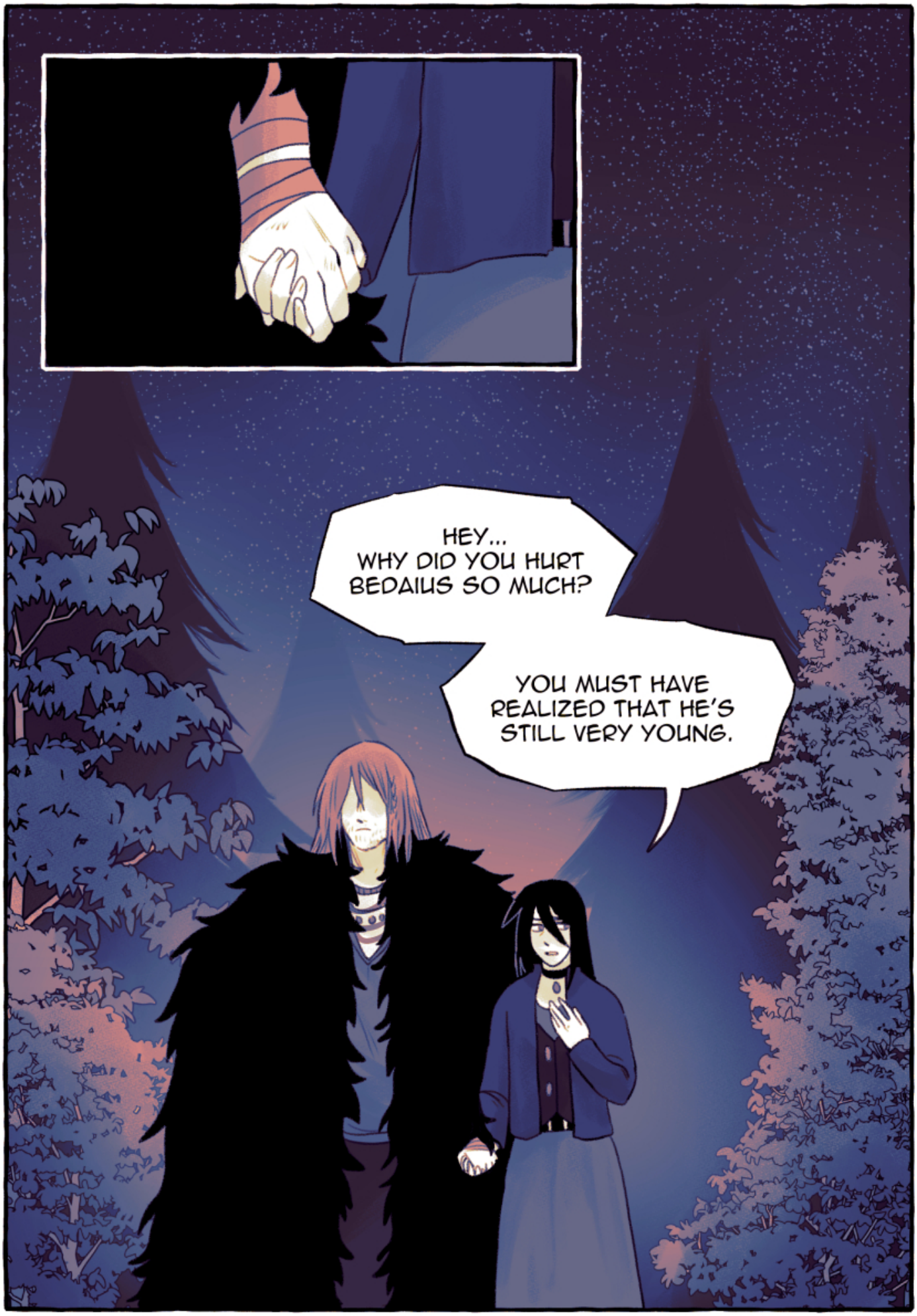
I'M NOT AFRAID OF HIM, BUT...
HE'S DEFINITELY NOT TELLING ME THE WHOLE TRUTH.

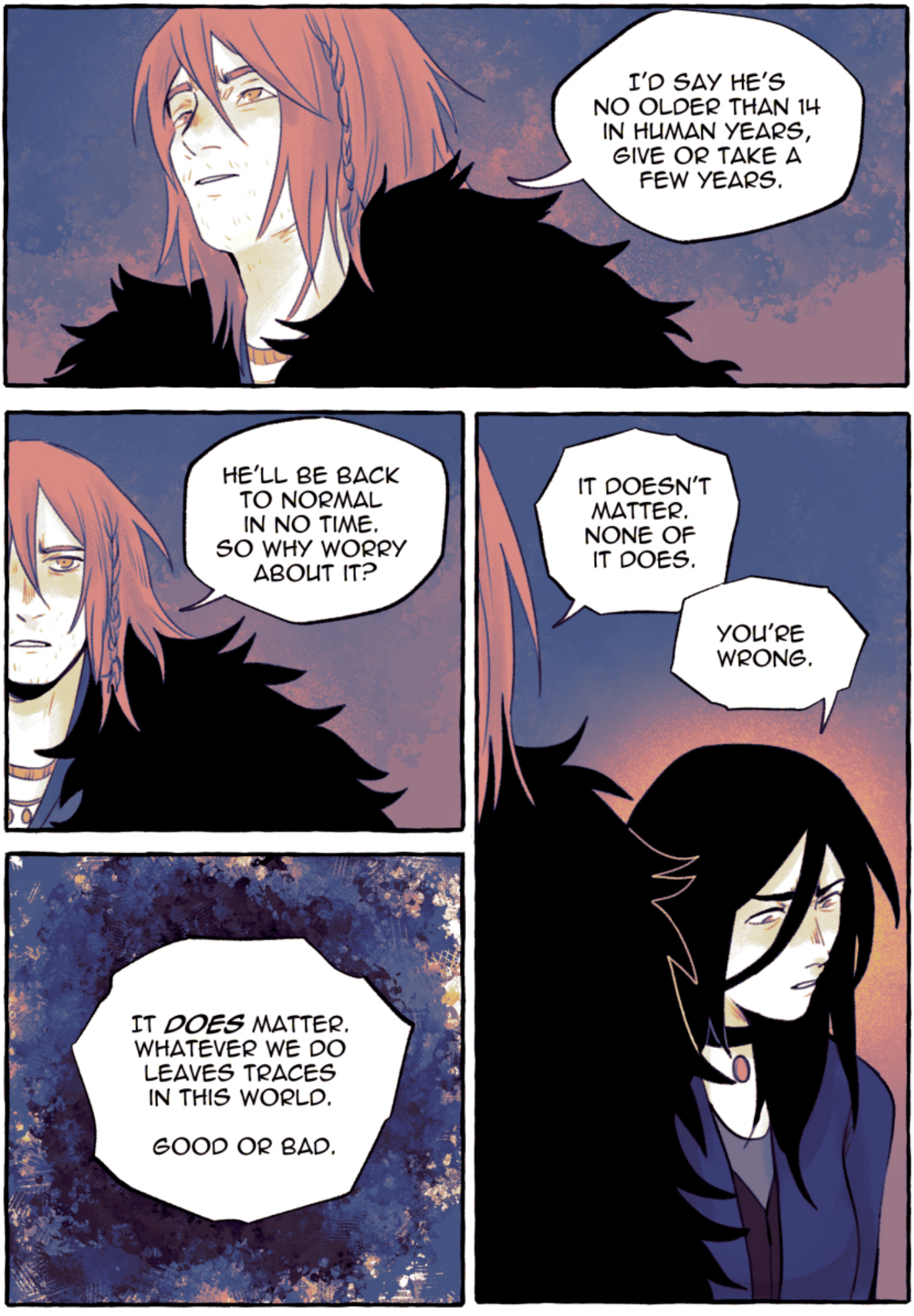
IT'S NOT THAT HIGH...
AHHCKK-!!

THE LONGER I'M HERE, THE MORE I FEEL LIKE I'VE FORGOTTEN SOMETHING REALLY, *REALLY* IMPORTANT...


THERE IS NO NIGHT WHEN I DON'T WANT TO LOSE MYSELF IN THE STARRY SKY, YOU KNOW?
EVEN THOUGH IT'S NOT COMPLETE.
NOT COMPLETE? WHY DO YOU SAY THAT?
UHM–


I JUST... KNOW IT.
IT FEELS LIKE SOMETHING IS MISSING FROM THE SKY, THAT'S ALL.
WEIRD, I KNOW.
UHM- DID I SAY SOMETHING WRONG?
ooo
IT'S NOTHING.
COME ON, LET'S GET YOU HOME BEFORE THE RAIN PICKS UP AGAIN.


HEY...
WHY DID YOU HURT BEDAIUS SO MUCH?
YOU MUST HAVE REALIZED THAT HE'S STILL VERY YOUNG.


I'D SAY HE'S NO OLDER THAN 14 IN HUMAN YEARS, GIVE OR TAKE A FEW YEARS.
HE'LL BE BACK TO NORMAL IN NO TIME. SO WHY WORRY ABOUT IT?
IT DOESN'T MATTER. NONE OF IT DOES.
YOU'RE WRONG.
IT *DOES* MATTER. WHATEVER WE DO LEAVES TRACES IN THIS WORLD.
GOOD OR BAD.

LISTEN, AVA...
PLEASE FORGIVE MY BEHAVIOR TODAY.
I DIDN'T MEAN TO UPSET YOU, AND I WANT TO ENJOY OUR TIME TOGETHER.

PLEASE DON'T LET IT HAPPEN AGAIN.
I DON'T WANT TO REGRET BELIEVING IN YOUR GOOD HEART.

I'LL BE ON MY BEST BEHAVIOR.
I PROMISE.
*END CHAPTER 4